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B2B Marketing

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Become an ABM champion:

How to set and smash your targets



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Section 1

Introduction



Mary-Anne Baldwin
Head of content,
B2B Marketing

At B2B Marketing we're privileged to be party to a lot of private and personal conversations about the job of being a marketer. I've learnt loads about what keeps you up at night.

As the head of the content team I'm often surprised (and grateful) about the honesty shared during our interviews. I think it's a bit of catharsis for them to be able to say out loud what's been challenging them. And let's face it, we can all find our jobs a bit challenging at times.

As you can guess we're big fans of honesty here, and also of account-based marketing. We talk a lot about it and get others to as well. So we hear a lot of niggles. Like how hard to it is to do ABM on top of all your other work (because it's always 'as well as', not 'instead of'). Or how uncomfortable it is to realise how little you actually knew about your customers until ABM forced you to dig deeper.

But the biggest niggle is the pressure to deliver strategic ABM at the pace of demand generation. It's a problem stemming from your stakeholders not fully understanding the longer-term (but higher value) processes behind ABM. And in a bid to get them to agree to ABM you may have found that you didn't actively tackle their unreasonable demands. You might have agreed to accounts that just weren't up to muster. You've found questions about ROI timeframes hard to answer. And despite seeing the value of ABM first-hand, you might feel like you're fudging your success metrics.

Given the amount of people who talk about this, I can tell that it's all normal. You're confident in ABM (76% of you want to increase your efforts in it in the year ahead), but it's hard to make promises about what it can do for you when everyone's ABM programme is a little bit different. We've all got different budgets, different aims and work in uniquely different teams.

If you've read last year's ABM report you'll have a solid understanding of what ABM is, the benefits it delivers and the processes taken to deliver them. And through case studies you'll have seen what it can do for other marketers. But we want you to be confident about what it can do for you.

So in the pages that follow we'll give you tools to assess the cost of ABM, how to measure the value of an account, when to expect ROI and what success markers you'll be seeing along the way. These things will help sustain confidence from your stakeholders, as well as you.

I hope you find this guide useful. And don't forget that we're always on hand if you have more unanswered questions more, want to gain some peer support or need expert advice. Happy ABMing.

Executive summary

Appetite for ABM

In short, there's plenty of appetite for ABM but also room for growth with 76% of practitioners expecting their efforts in ABM to increase over the year ahead. Of the 300+ respondants we asked, the largest pool (49%) are still evaluating ABM's fit with their organisation with roughly a quarter each either planning ABM or delivering a pilot. Only 14% – the longer term ABMers – are upscaling their existing efforts.

Early benefits

Most of those active in ABM have been running their programmes for under six months; yet, they're already seeing benefits. Alignment between sales and marketing is the most common (54%). Additionally, 39% have already seen growth in their existing accounts, 34% have seen improved win rates for new accounts and 23% have seen improved customer retention.

Timeframes for ROI

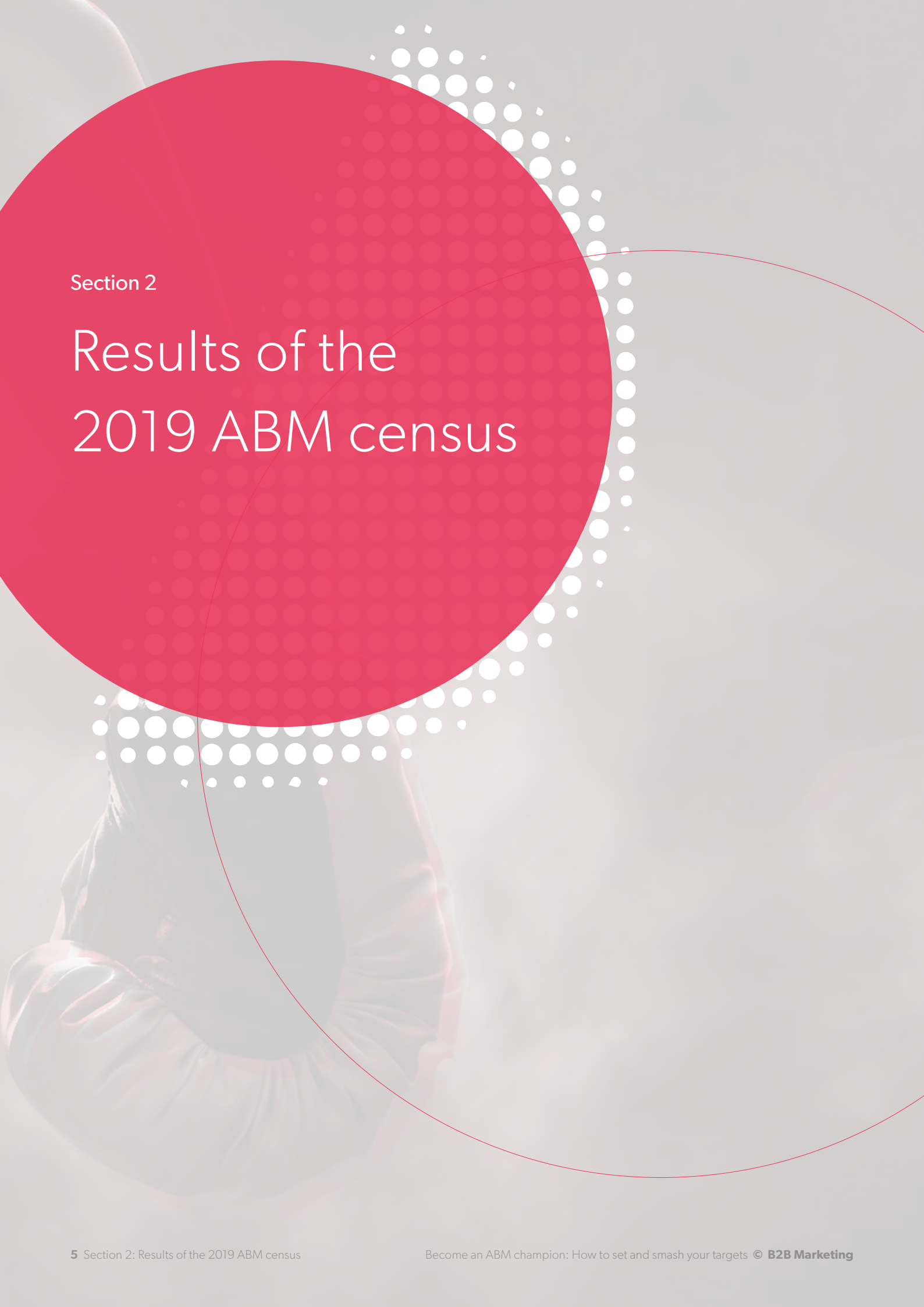
Despite the long sales cycles on ABM projects, 41% of practitioners said theirs have already delivered a return on investment. Furthermore, those who have hit ROI did so within an average of 9.8 months, which is markedly shorter than the typical 12-18 month sales cycle, and ABMer's estimated 12 months.

Challenges

As with last year, by far the biggest hurdle for ABM practitioners is a lack of deep account insight. This burden can be significantly relieved when selecting fewer accounts, yet practitioners now favour one-to-few, which means collecting data on a larger number of companies and additional burden on those with the task. With this said, most don't feel they have an overly ambitious number of accounts, or indeed the wrong ones.

Section 2

Results of the 2019 ABM census



Section 2

Results of the 2019 ABM census

2.1 Investment and ROI

Budget and resource

We've great news for those invested in ABM – from practitioners through to the vendors and agencies that support them. ABM is still 'on the up'. Our survey shows that 76% of practitioners expect their total efforts in ABM to increase over the year ahead. Not only does it demonstrate ABM's value in modern marketing, it's also a reflection of the efforts delivered in securing buy-in and early results.

But for those still scoping ABM, or those early on in their programmes, it's useful to start with a baseline estimate on the costs and resources required. This report will provide further details and case studies later on, including when to expect ROI and the typical cost per account, but for now, we can reveal that the average initial set-up cost is £11,600.

ABM's average initial set-up cost is £11,600

Furthermore, marketers typically allocate 30% of their overall marketing budget to ABM (up 7% from last year).

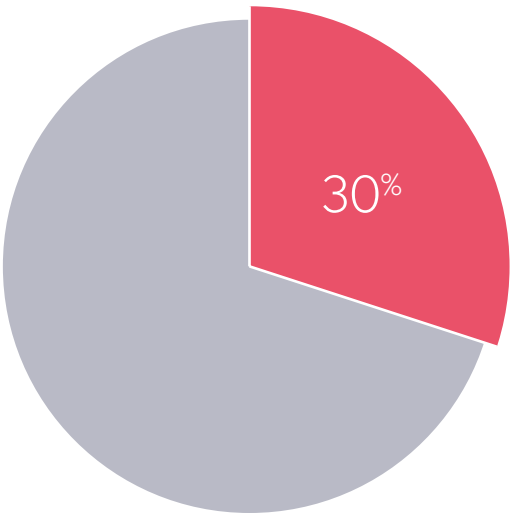
In terms of the time and effort spent, ABM is typically given 32% of the team's time and effort (up 6% from last year). But already ABM leads would like this to increase to around 47%.

"The £11,600 set up cost is of course an average. Every business deploys ABM differently and will be operating to different constraints so the actual investment could be either higher or lower than this. The important thing is to fully understand an account's expected incremental revenue (usually in year one, although the lifetime can be useful) and set an investment cost that makes financial sense to the business."

Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme

76% of practitioners expect their total efforts in ABM to increase over the year ahead

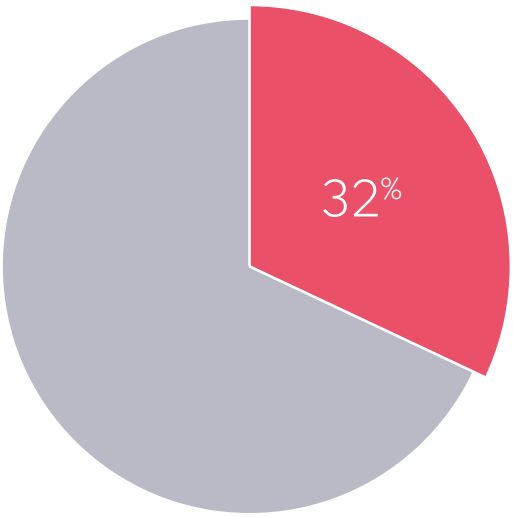
What percentage of your marketing budget do you allocate to ABM?



+7% YoY

+10% from 2017

What percentage of your resource do you allocate to ABM?



+6% YoY

+12% from 2017

"Across our division we've been doing forms of what people would call ABM for various customers. I would say it's been a bit mixed in terms of approach – we've lacked a framework and strategy. There have been some great results in pockets and in others, there's an opportunity to be more strategic. That's helped make the decision to bring in a new function that looks at ABM at a business level, maximising opportunities and tailoring it to our customers. We now have a dedicated ABM team, which is amazing because usually people end up having to do it on the side."

Kate Owen, director, strategic marketing and industries, Capita

For more on how to benchmark and estimate your ABM investment, delivery and metrics, turn to section 3 on page 20.

ROI

Despite the relative youth of most ABM projects, 41% of practitioners said theirs have already delivered a return on investment. This is more good news for those already sold on the benefits ABM has to offer. Furthermore, global averages from our survey show most of those who have hit ROI did so within 9.8 months, markedly shorter than the typical 12-18 month sales cycle and ABMer's estimated 12 months.

It's likely these early wins have been secured with the savvy inclusion of existing accounts, particularly those at the middle to end of their cycle, which helps demonstrate value early on. However, with typical sales cycles of 12-18 months, we expect ROI on new accounts to fall around the one year mark.

41% of practitioners said their ABM programme has already delivered a return on investment

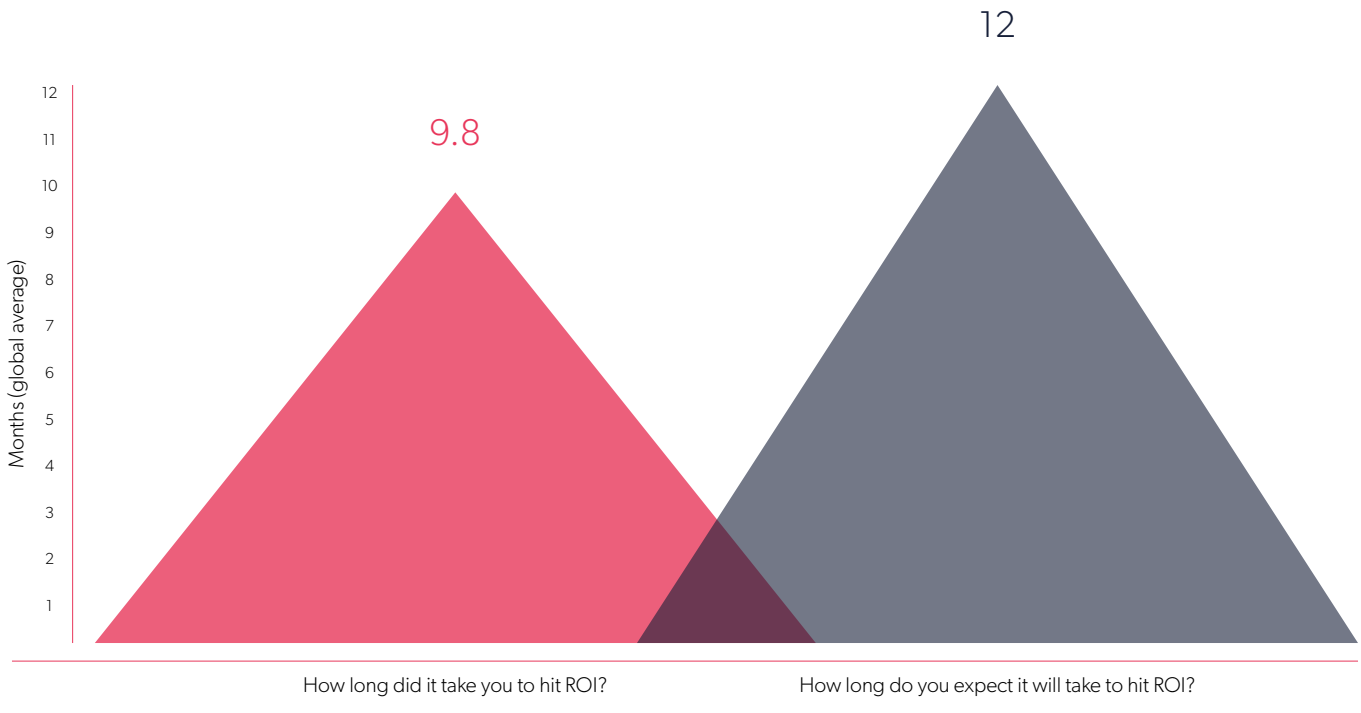
Those who have hit ROI did so within 9.8 months (global average)

"You measure a win in a number of ways. Revenue is obviously important, but it's also about how your relationships are developing and how your reputation is maturing in that organisation. If all of the three R's – revenue, relationships and reputation – are maturing, then the account is becoming more critical to the business."

David Cotterill, marketing director, Europe, Conduent

"When I first started, I thought I'd see ROI quickly but I learned to record value in multiple areas. We look at things like increasing opt-in rates and getting meetings with key account members."

Rachel Tait, head of ABM UK&I, SAS



Metrics

While ROI can often be seen in as little as 9.8 months, many more complex programmes will take longer. For that reason, it's crucial to set realistic goals and timeframes (which this guide will help you on). The most salient advice is not to fall back into using demand generation metrics, as old habits can lead some to do in the early days.

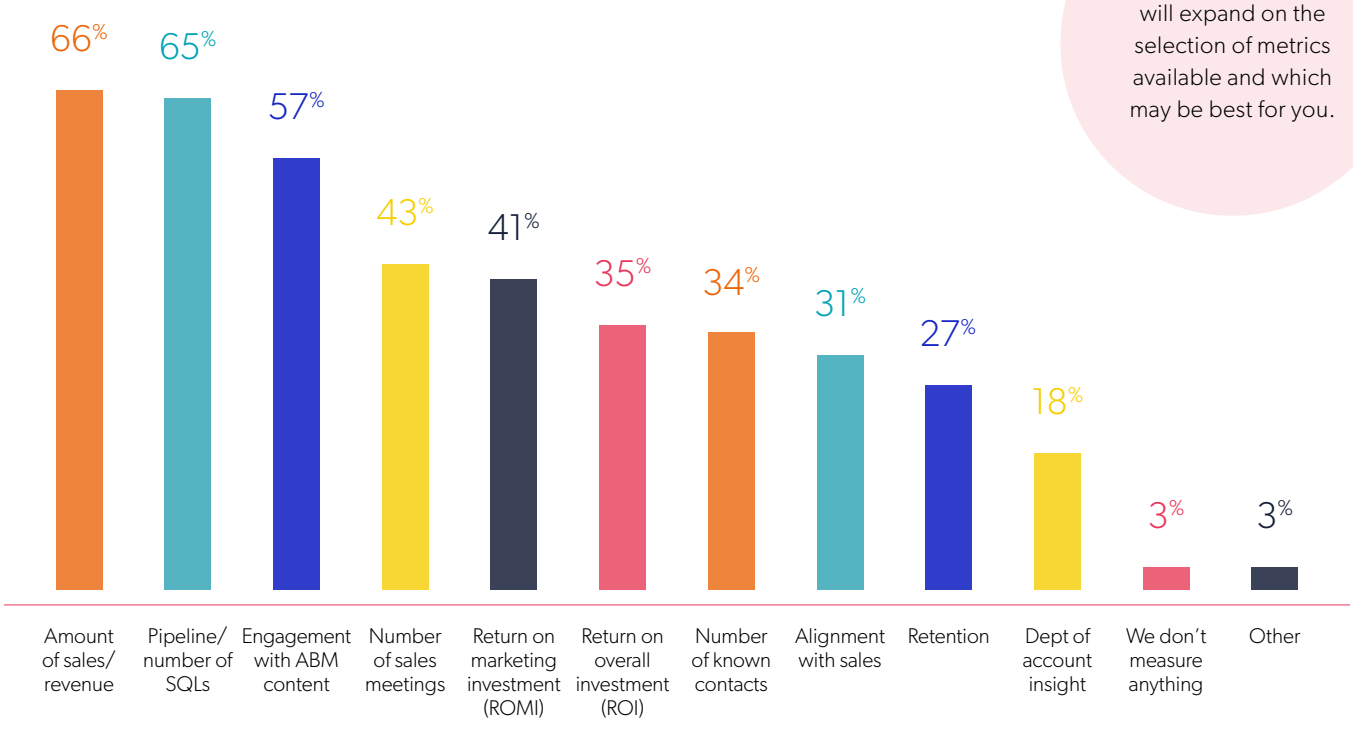
The other key learning is to measure activity, not just the sale. That means picking metrics that celebrate success along the way. After all, your stakeholders won't wait silently until you help land the big deal; they will need assurance that your key accounts are increasingly engaged.

Still, the most common measurement of success in ABM is revenue (66%), shortly followed by pipeline in SQLs (65%). Looking at softer metrics, 57% measure engagement in ABM content, and 43% the number of sales meetings.

The least commonly used metric with regard to ABM efforts is the depth of account insight (18%), which is surprising given that this is seen to be the biggest challenge and area most in need of support, as we'll soon discuss.

> *"In the early days, it's particularly important not to fall into the trap of using conventional demand generation KPIs for ABM. The value of the pipeline you're influencing is important, but ABM is not about stuffing things with SQLs. ABM is about building and harnessing stronger relationships across a wider scope of influence within key accounts. It's about empowering the sales effort so they can identify and exploit new opportunities more effectively. So I would expect to see a mix of hard and soft metrics that accurately demonstrate how both sales and marketing have added value to the process by working in unison."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme**

Which criteria do you use to measure ABM?



On pages 26-34 we will expand on the selection of metrics available and which may be best for you.

2.2 A snapshot of the appetite for ABM

What's the current appetite for ABM?

In short, there's plenty of appetite for ABM but also room for growth. The largest pool of respondents (49%) are still evaluating ABM's fit with their organisation with roughly a quarter each either planning ABM or delivering a pilot. Only 14% – the longer term ABMers – are upscaling their existing efforts.

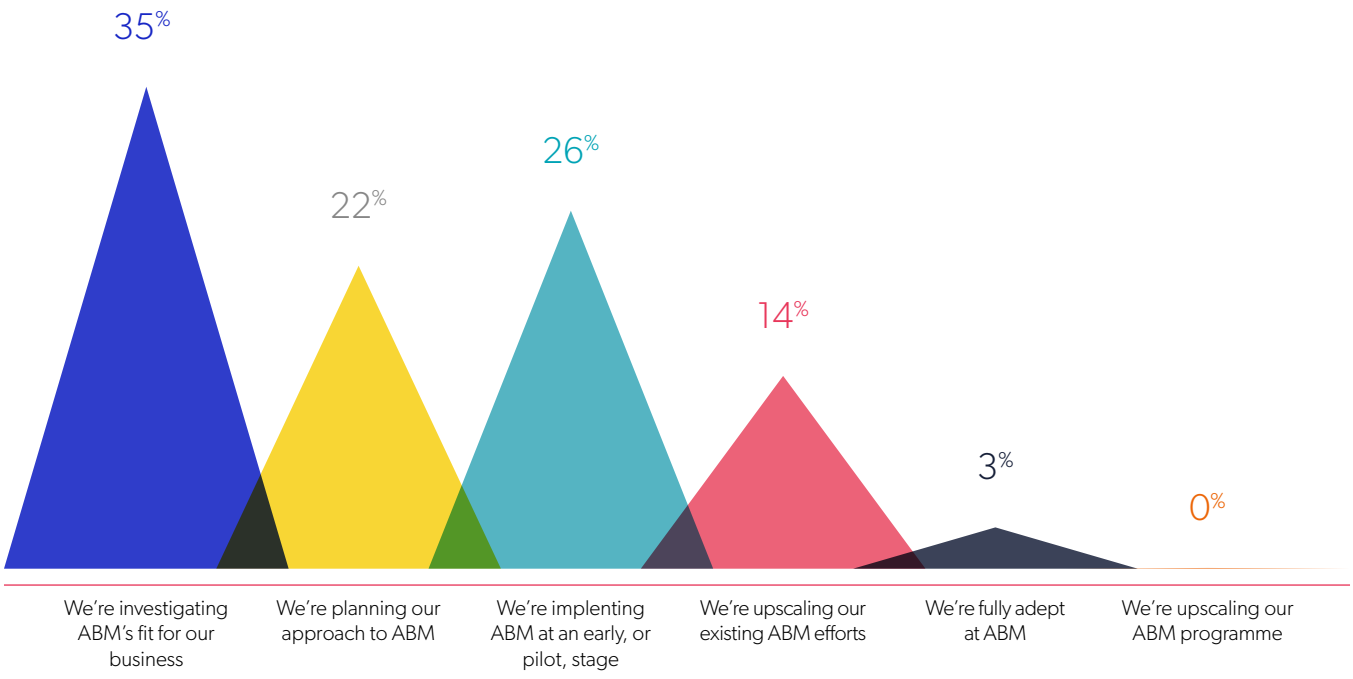
Most of those active in ABM have been running their programmes for a year or less (28%) with 11% having been in operation for 1-3 years and 6% beyond that.

Year-on-Year: The number of people scoping ABM's fit for their business has risen from 33% to 49% year-on-year, showing a strong pipeline of ABM players for the years ahead. Percentage wise, there is a like-for-like number of people both active in running ABM (24% in 2018 and 26% in 2019) and upscaling their initial efforts (both 14%).

Most of those active in ABM have been running their programmes for a year or less, with 11% in operation for 1-3 years

You can find more on the progression ABMers have taken this year in our 2019 ABM Competency Model on page 42

Which of the following best describes your organisation's current efforts with ABM?



Which approach to ABM do people prefer?

No one we spoke to is operating ABM under a hybrid approach but have selected just one method. The most popular is one-to-few (37%) shortly followed by one-to-one (32%). Just 7% are running one-to-many ABM.

Year-on-Year: The preference for each of the three main types of ABM (one-to-one, few and many) has changed slightly year-on-year with one-to-one slipping from the top spot of popularity, replaced by one-to-few. In many cases, that's because the cost of one-to-one is prohibitive to running on all but a few accounts, and having just a few accounts equates to a lower chance of return.

While one-to-one is more manageable to operate in terms of data collection (ABMers' top challenge, as we will see), one-to-few allows marketers to spread the cost and risk across a larger pool of accounts.

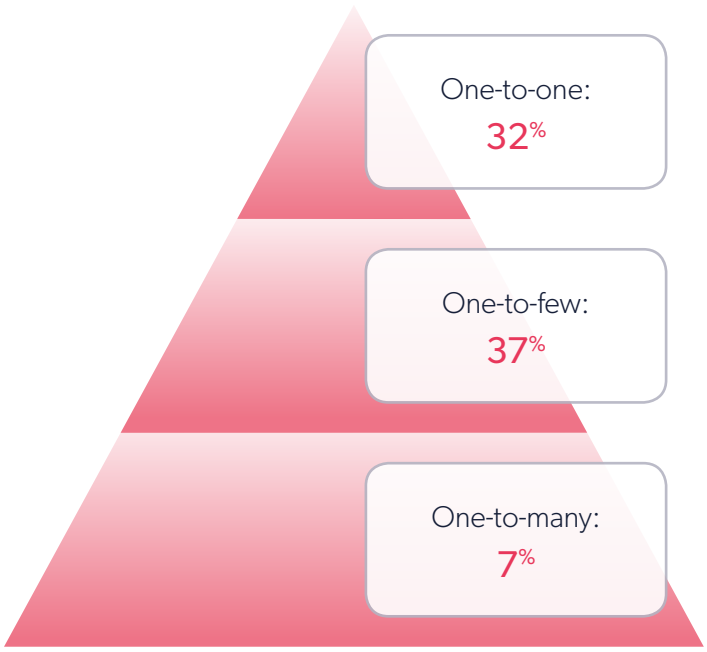
"I don't think anything gives the same return as truly one-to-one ABM, but it's not feasible to deal with every client like that so there needs to be a way of engaging with those clients where we keep the principles of ABM by clustering. We need to be doing this across the board and also manage expectations that return isn't going to be the same as strategic one-to-one."

Laura McFadyen, ABM manager at Wood Mackenzie (now senior marketing manager, Core HR)

"One-to-one clearly requires more intensive investment per account. I do see more organisations adopting ABM but in many cases, the annual revenues and lifetime value cannot justify the high level of investment required to execute one-to-one."

Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme

Which method of ABM do you use?



(24% Haven't decided yet)

2.3 Ambitions and blockers

Ambitions and benefits

ABM has a lot to offer and its followers are pretty equally allured by each gain, yet just out in front is the ability to win new accounts (30%). This is followed by the ability to grow existing accounts (28%), meanwhile retention peaks the interest of 26% of those we spoke to.

Of the benefits already seen by ABM practitioners, alignment between sales and marketing is the most common (54%). And despite the youth of most ABM programmes, 39% have already seen a growth in their existing accounts, 34% have seen improved win rates for new accounts and 23% have seen improved customer retention.

"It's not at all surprising that alignment is one of the big wins as this is the prerequisite for ABM to consistently deliver in the long-term. It's huge that sales and marketing are really working together far more effectively than ever before, that leads to a host of benefits."

Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme

"Such a close-knit partnership between sales and marketing – as you see in ABM – really is quite unique."

David De Smedt, European marketing and communications manager, DS Smith

Despite most having run their ABM programmes for six months or less, ABM practitioners are already seeing these early benefits

54%

of ABM practitioners are already seeing greater alignment between sales and marketing

39%

have seen growth in their existing accounts

34%

have seen improved win rates for new accounts

23%

have seen improved customer retention

What are the biggest benefits you've derived from ABM since it's been a part of your marketing strategy?



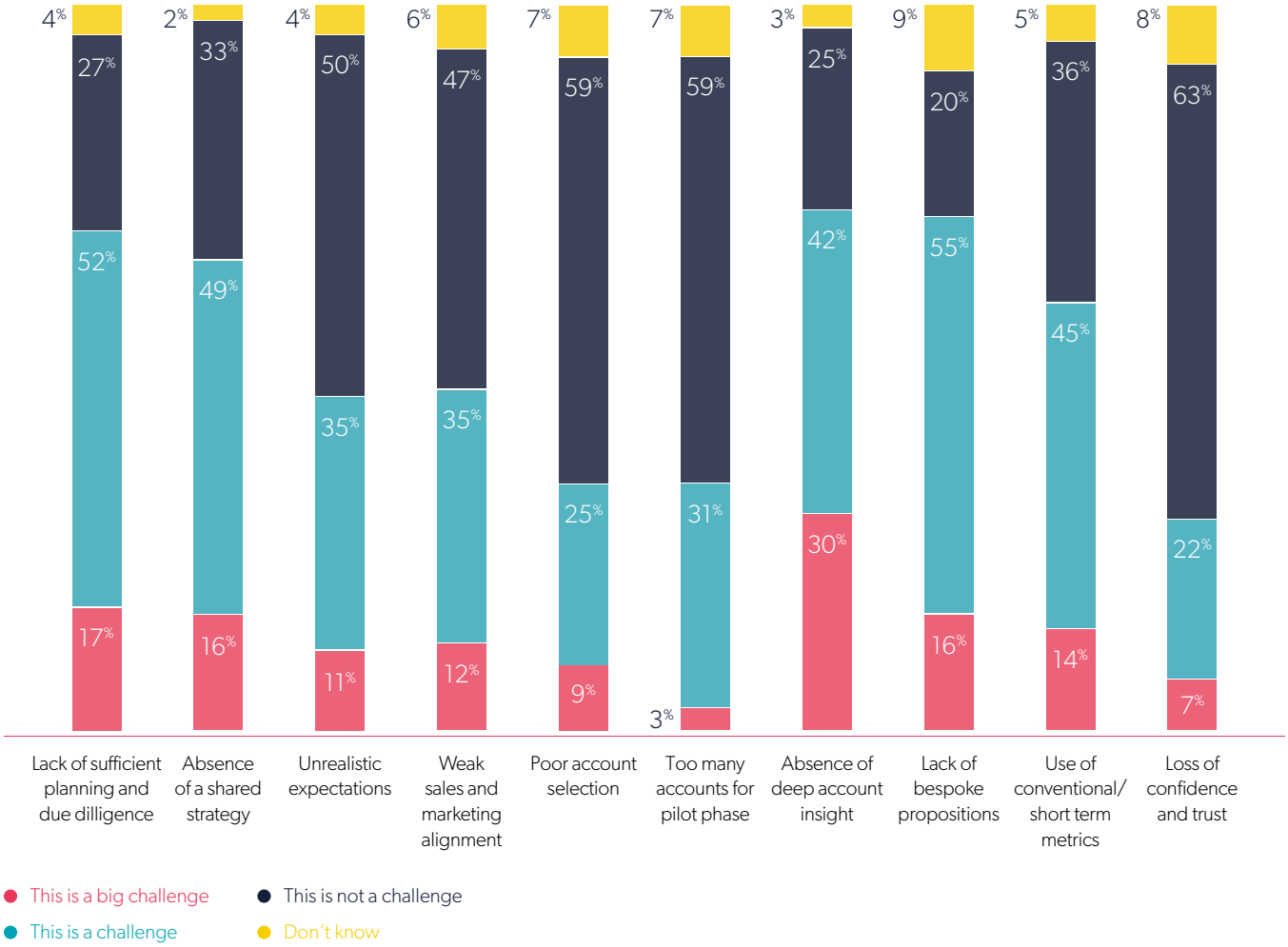
Challenges and blockers

As with last year, by far the biggest hurdle for ABM practitioners is a lack of deep account insight (30%). It's clear that data and insight take significant time to collect, clean and draw insights from.

As reasoned in our 2018 report, this burden can be significantly relieved when selecting fewer accounts, particularly existing ones that you've had time to get to know. Yet, as we saw on page 11, practitioners now favour one-to-few, which means collecting data on a larger number of companies and additional burden on those tasked with doing so.

With this said, most don't feel they have an overly ambitious number of accounts (viewed as the least challenging of the 10 areas discussed), or indeed the wrong ones (with poor account selection coming 8 out of 10).

How significant are the following challenges in deploying ABM within your organisation?



"Often the first party data we need for ABM is siloed or difficult to access. It can often take longer to locate and assimilate than expected, especially because many think this will be the easy bit! Once you have identified what you do know, it can then take a while to establish the known unknowns. Deep account insight of the kind that really makes a difference does require an investment – it's why I advocate an initial pilot of a few accounts to keep everything manageable."

Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme

"Data is key and you need to make it accessible to everyone; a dashboard is great for that. It's something where you're putting all of your marketing automation, your paid media, social media platforms, your CRM and KPIs together. Seeing all that data in one place gets people excited, especially when the actual revenue begins to come through."

Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners

2.4 Team resource

What makes a great ABMer?

We've looked at the resource requirements for ABM, but what about the type of resource you'll need? What makes a great team, and how do you build it?

The trait most sought in an ABM marketer is the ability to influence and build relationships (25%). This is particularly essential in gaining support and working with sales.

Some way behind this, but in second place, is an analytical mindset (15%). Meanwhile, 14% viewed prior ABM experience as the trait of most importance. Commercial acumen was seen as the least important trait (of the eight discussed).

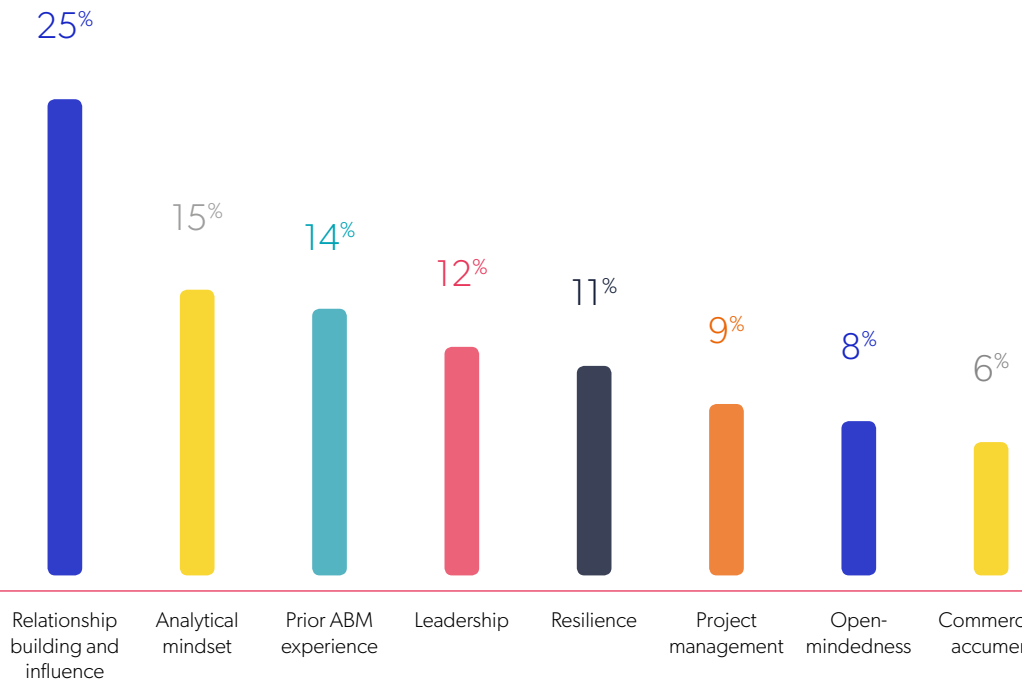
"Some of the marketing communication team members already had previous experience in ABM and were able to act as champions. It meant when we carried out a handful of ABM pilots, we were really successful. Yet, when we found ourselves in a marketing restructure this year we decided to define an ABM team so we have dedicated resources."

Kate Tomlinson, marketing director, Refinitiv

"My ideal would be to have an industry lead who runs a cluster of one to three accounts, delivering a full ABM programme to them. If you have someone who understands financial services or what's affecting banking asset management, that's hugely important because the messaging for those financial accounts would be different to another sector."

Kate Owen, director, strategic marketing and industries, Capita

How important do you consider the following traits to be within your ABM team?

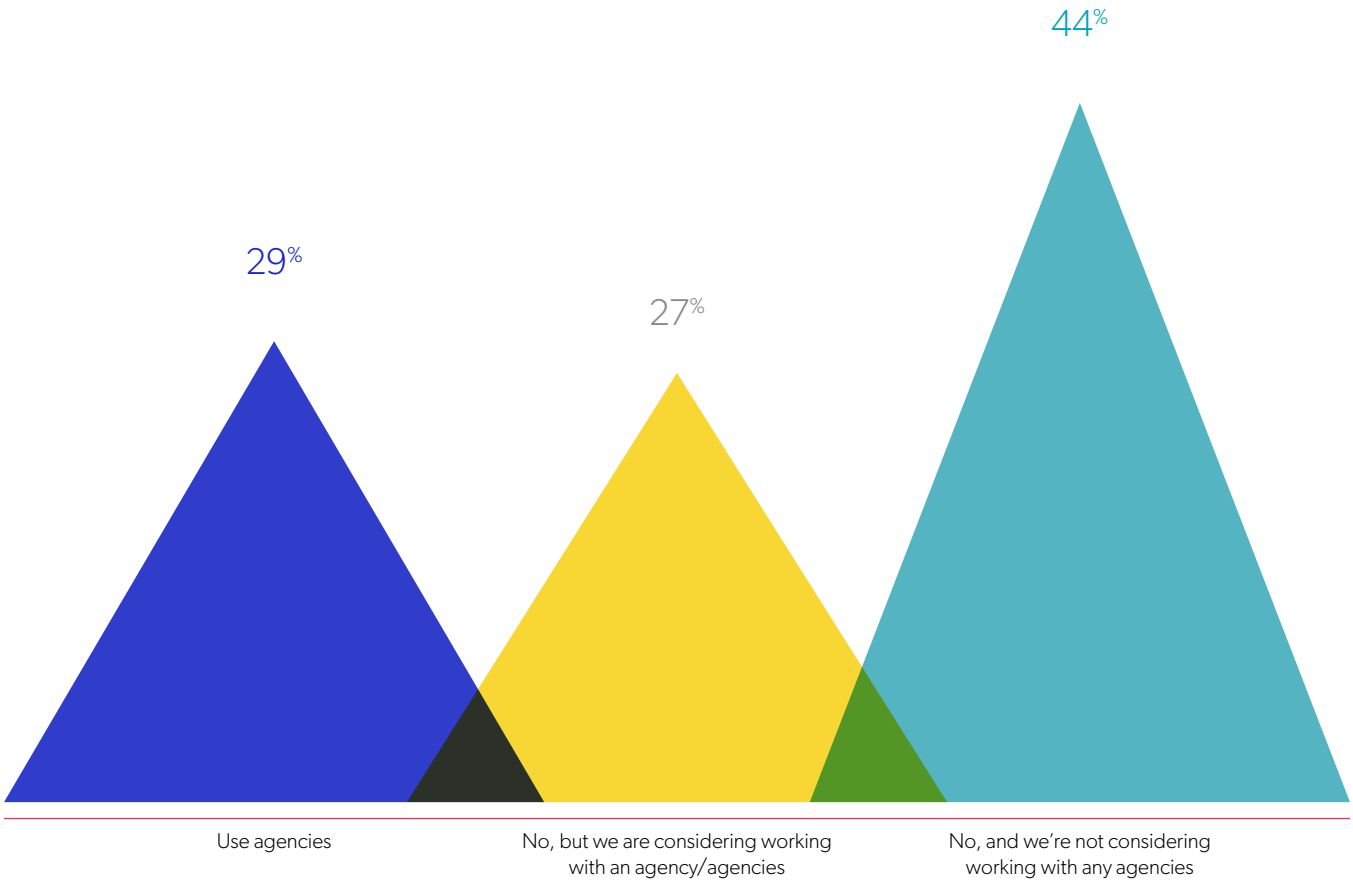


Agencies

Of those active in ABM, 29% use agencies (11% multiple and 18% just one), meanwhile, 27% are considering doing so. However, at 44%, the largest group neither use agencies or would consider doing so.

Year-on-Year: There has been a 10% year-on-year increase in the number of businesses using agencies to help deliver ABM. About the same number year-on-year are looking to start using ABM agencies for the first time in the not-too-distant future.

Do you work with agencies to help you with your deployment of ABM?



Case study

How Atos won new business through deal-based marketing

As a leader in digital services, Atos UK & Irelands' marketing strategy is always evolving – but it's account-based marketing (ABM) model achieved a significant step change. It developed a strategic, systematic and creative approach to winning new deals, both with existing clients and new clients.

ABM has delivered extraordinary business growth for Atos and has elevated its marketing team into becoming truly client-centric. Now, as a business and as marketers, it's more innovative, creative, digital, braver and bolder.

About Atos

Atos is a leader in digital services, with annual revenues of €11 billion and 110,000 employees in 73 countries. The group provides cloud, cybersecurity, high-performance computing, big data, business applications, BPO and digital workplace solutions.

Atos' marketing team has always worked closely with account and sales/deal teams to create new business opportunities through differentiated, high-value content and client engagement. Three years ago, its SVP for sales and marketing had seen that what marketing was doing on some of the bid/deals was differentiating it from competitors. The SVP challenged the marketing team to devise a model for doing this more systematically and consistently across all new deals, in a way that would give Atos a competitive advantage.

Objectives

- Create a 50% increase in new business won over a three-year period
- Increase the win rate on deals by 20% within a 3-year period
- Ability to support an additional 30 deals during 2018/2019
- Bring 10 new clients into the business during 2018/2019
- Deliver a 50:1 ROI through the programme during 2018/2019

> *"Our deal-based marketing model has enabled a significant transformation for our business. The team has collaborated strongly to beat our ambitious sales targets, bringing new rigour, creativity and passion in positioning Atos as a tier one digital services leader. We stand out far above our competitors."*
>
> **Mark Ingleby, SVP sales and marketing, Atos (now COO, global sales, Atos)**







Target audience

Senior client/prospect buyers on Atos' bids/deals including board level individuals (CEO, COO, chief digital officer, CTO/CIO, CFO, CPO) and their direct reports. Covering private and public sector markets.

Media, channels and techniques used

Atos' approach embedded a new business-wide model that applies ABM technologies, techniques and methodologies to winning new deals. Marketers spend 50% of their day supporting deals and work collectively on 10-15 deals each day.

Specialist agencies included:

Agent3: Built a client insight team specifically within marketing, which provides deal-based client insight on individual stakeholders.

Coterie: Delivered value propositions/messaging by working with Atos' marketers on market/industry-based content that is re-used and tailored to each deal.

Oliver: Joined a hybrid creative onsite team specifically to work on each deal. This provided individual, personalised and digital creative for each deal.

Example ABM campaigns

Atos included a mix of media/channels in supporting each deal from initial awareness generation through to closure, with different tactics chosen depending on what was needed to respond to the target audience.

Example: A leading gas and electricity provider (new client, winning new business)

The challenge was to illustrate Atos as a digital disruptor in the gas and electricity industry so that the prospect would have confidence in their long-term relationship bringing new possibilities, delivering transformation and future-proofing solutions.



Vending machines

Creative: Atos delivered a 12-month campaign under the theme of 'What If…' This included presentations, emails, executive summaries, infographics, diagrams, direct-mail shots (hand delivered), social media to provide consistent, personalised and differentiated messaging. Interactive rich pictures, animations and videos to illustrate the long-term journey they would embark on together.

Client insight: Stakeholder mapping and relationship trackers, utilising the client insight platform to provide real-time insight to the sales/deal teams.

Events: Sponsorship of an industry summit, innovation sessions, workshops and a site visit to demonstrate credentials and build relationships.

Example: Public sector body (existing client, winning new business)

The challenge was to radically change perceptions of Atos from a traditional IT vendor to a trusted digital innovation partner at the heart of public sector modernisation. Atos introduced an innovative 18-month campaign: 'Reimagining the User Experience' which rebranded/repositioned it by showcasing its digital story and end-client focus.

Creative: Blend of digital and printed collateral, including interactive rich pictures, augmented reality and use of AtosConnect (its personalised digital app for clients).

Events: Sponsorship of innovation and diversity events bringing the key stakeholders and client influencers together.

Messaging: Utilised for a new account vision with senior Atos stakeholders.

Timescales

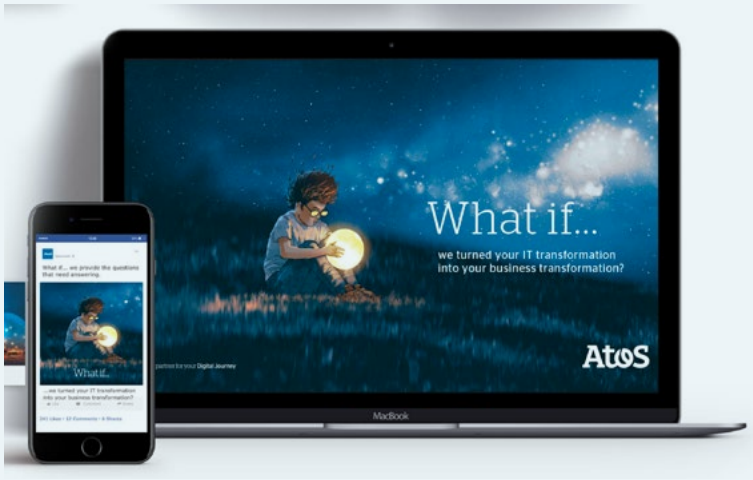
- **Jan-April 2015:** Research and planning
- **May-July 2015:** Business case and pilot model deployment
- **Aug-Dec 2015:** Pilot model deployment
- **Jan-March 2016:** Pilot review and model sign-off
- **2016-now:** Full model deployment and refinement including resource expansion in January 2019
- **Weekly:** KPI calls, sales/deal/marketing team workshops/resource/results/progress calls

Budgets

This is the largest investment Atos has ever made into a marketing programme. The costs cannot be provided as they are commercially sensitive but include all resources, media, technology described in this case study.

Results delivered

- 167% increase in new business won over a three-year period (against 50% target)
- 76% deal win rate in 2018/2019 (compared with a 34% win rate in 2015/2016) (42% increase compared with 20% target)



- 18 new clients brought into the business in 2018/2019 (compared with three new clients in 2015/2016) (15 new logos increase compared with target of 10)
- 140:1 ROI delivered during 2018/2019 (against 50:1 target)

Additional results/benefits

Marketers are more creative, proactive and braver in their approach.

Marketers feel highly valued, illustrated through receiving 87% in 2018's Great Place To Work survey 7 x internal accolades received.

Section 3

Budget and ROI



Section 3

Budget and ROI

We asked the 41% of ABM practitioners that have so far hit ROI how long it took them to do so, and also what their initial set up costs were.

The average initial set up costs for ABM are £11,600. These costs define the basics of the ABM programme without extraordinary costs, such as investment in technology, hiring external agencies, the use of third party data providers or employment of external copywriters.

It should also be noted that in addition, most practitioners set expectations against the total cost per account, which includes all of the extraordinary costs above. This will vary significantly depending on the value of the account and ABM methodology you're running (the cost per account being much higher for one-to-one than one-to-many).

Given the expanse of variables at play, our survey does not cover the cost per account – although the below 'Account investment estimates' shows estimated costs per account on each of the three methods. In addition, page 25 reveals the budget and results for three real-world ABM case studies.

On average, it's taken ABM practitioners a global average of 9.8 months to hit ROI – but again there are numerous variables to consider. For example, the time it takes to close a deal on an existing account that was nearing the end of its sales cycle will be much shorter than the time it takes to close a deal with a new account you know very little about. Furthermore, typically the larger the deal, the longer the sales cycle. With average UK sales cycles of 12-18 months, you should expect new deals to close at the end of this period.

Account investment estimates

Here Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start programme, gives us an overview of the expected costs per account aligned to each of the three ABM methodologies.

"There is no hard formula here, but clearly sales revenue/profit and lifetime value are all relevant in justifying investment. Some organisations have no predetermined budget and will apply for it with a business case as a new initiative arises. Others have a set limit and divert existing marketing budget (i.e. switching out of demand gen), these operators are often more risk adverse," says Andy.

One-to-one
The most intensive form of ABM: £10k-£50k each account.

One-to-few
Clustered ABM is more efficient, provides economy of scale and spread risks: £30k-£50k across the 5-10 accounts.

One-to-many
Covers 100+ accounts, normally 100% digital or tech-driven with low touch: £50k-£100k+ p.a.

3.1 Costs and ROI: The survey findings

To follow we reveal the typical set up costs and time to ROI by looking geographies, sectors and the size of the business.

The larger the organisation the more it struggles

The largest companies we looked at (those of over £100 million in total revenue) spend almost double the amount on initial set up costs than their smallest counterparts (up to £20 million in revenue, in terms of site) and take longer to hit ROI. These largest companies have average initial set up costs of £16,700 and take 12.8 months to deliver a return. Higher costs are likely due to the scale of the project, availability of funds and the cost inefficiencies seen at larger organisations. Inertia is most likely down to the size of the company, red tape and lack of internal collaboration.

Those in the US are both quicker and more cost effective

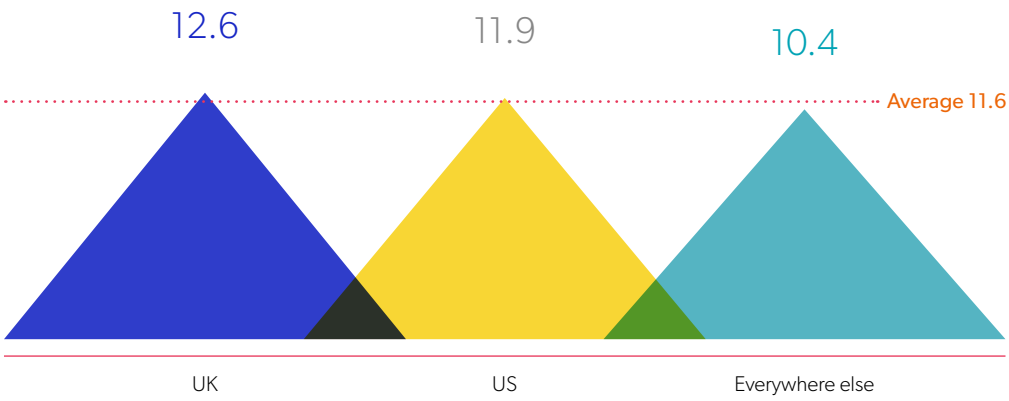
At 13.3 months, the time it takes for the UK's ABM practitioners to hit ROI is over double that of their US counterparts and higher than the average. While US practitioners spend the average amount on set up costs, the UK pays more than both the average and those in Europe and Asia.

The tech sector spend more but delivers faster

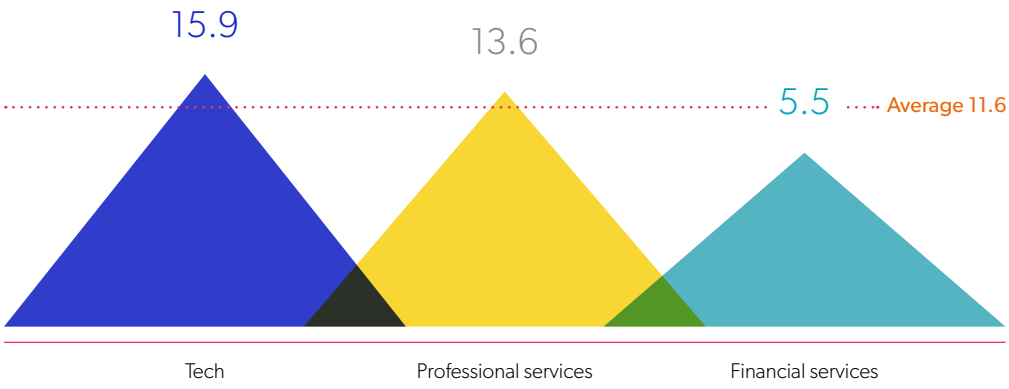
While tech firms pay more on their initial set up costs (likely due to their deals being larger), they are able to hit ROI within an average of 8.7 months – a significant distinction against their slower counterparts in professional services. Having been the first to adopt ABM, tech organisations have developed better processes and with existing agile practices already in place, they are inherently well-equipped for the methodology.

Initial set up costs

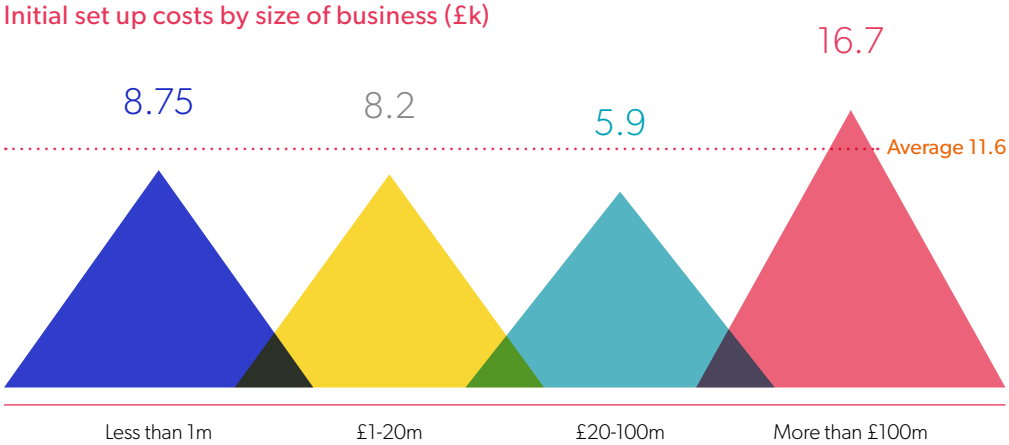
Initial set up costs by geography (£k)



Initial set up costs by sector (£k)



Initial set up costs by size of business (£k)

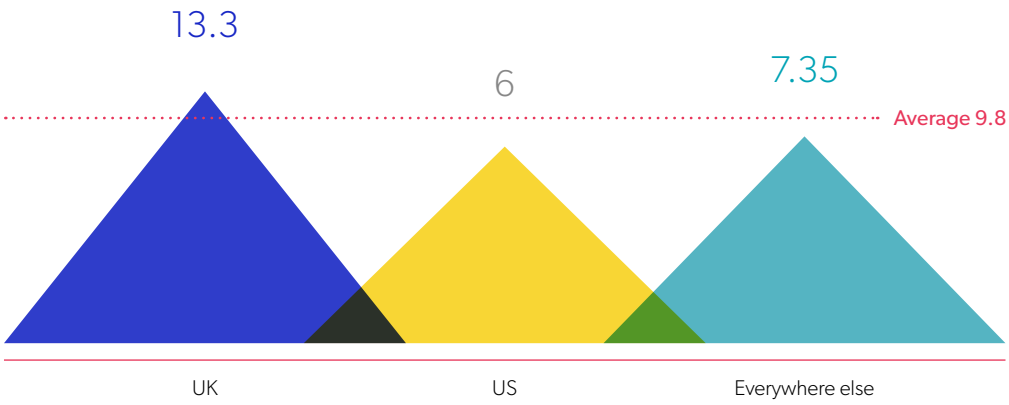


"Our clients are typically in technology and make big investments. We're talking an average customer value of well above half a million dollars, many are $50 million and these are on long sales cycles, typically around 12 to 18 months. Even in that timeframe I'd expect to see some return within six and twelve months. You won't see the final ROI, but you'll see the labour coming through and opportunities that are attributed to your ABM initiative."

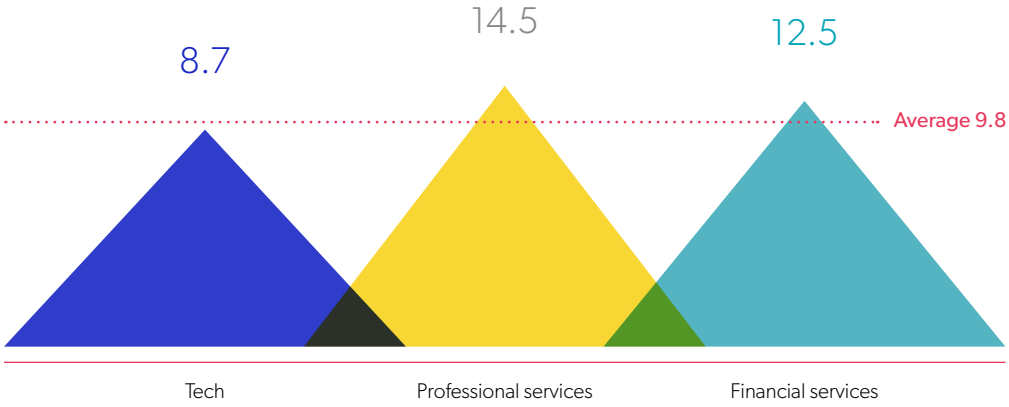
Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners

Time it's taken to hit ROI

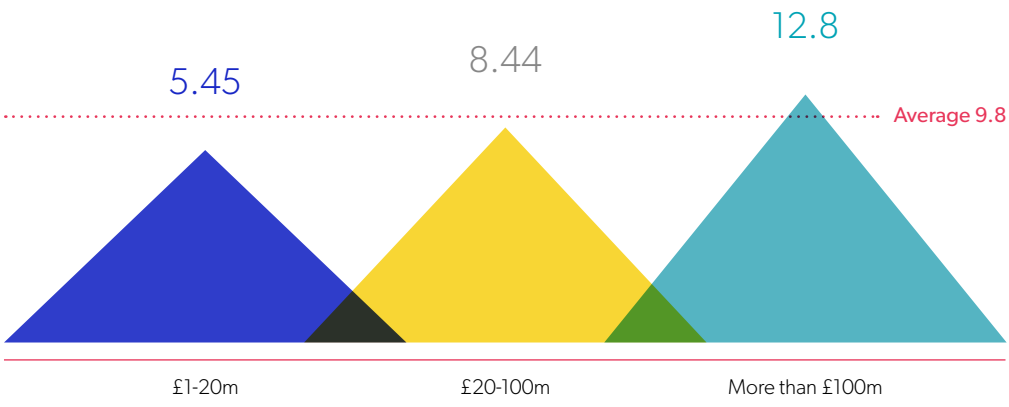
ROI timeframe by geography (months)



ROI timeframe by sector (£k)



ROI timeframe by size of business (£k)



"It's difficult to develop new business quickly through ABM but expanding an account can be done in a matter of weeks of months. That's because the amount of intelligence you can attain in today's very digital world is amazing. We can understand the stakeholder's personality, what content they're consuming, what discussions they're having. You can really get to the bottom of that individual's challenges."

David Cotterill, marketing director of Europe, Conduent

"The ABM programmes we deliver typically involve a two month set up with six to 12 month's execution time. ABM takes longer than traditional marketing because the results are better. People ideally like quick fixes and to see results, but as humans we always underestimate challenges."

Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners

3.2 Benchmarking case studies

As already discussed, the investment in ABM programmes – and therefore the results – range greatly across a wide number of variables. To help you benchmark, we've provided three ABM case studies showing the budget, results and timeframe for each.

> *"An ROI of 10:1 is a very good start. The way we look at it – which is by sales pipeline and opportunities – a 60:1 ROMI is a minimum target. That's the difference between ROI and ROMI."*
>
> **Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners**

1. Pulse's (now Transmission) programmatic ABM campaign garnered deep levels of audience and customer insight, ultimately generating $1.5 million in sales pipeline for its client Couchbase

Budgets:

- Strategy and Insight: $25,681
- Content Messaging: $14,857
- Activation (incl media): $94,013
- Reporting and Analytics: $14,046.
- Overall: $148,598.

Results:

- $1.5m worth of sales pipeline during phase 1 alone
- ROI of $10.5 : $1 and a 1371% increase in AOV.

Timeframe:

- Eight months

b2bmarketing.net/abminaction

2. Genesys created a 400% increase in target pipeline from high value accounts

Budget:

The original budget was undisclosed but included costs for agency consultancy and planning, content creation, distribution (including a microsite), data, events and social selling (including a predictive marketing tool). The proven efficiency and scalability of improvements means ABM now gets 30% share of the UK and Ireland marketing spend (previously zero).

Results:

- 400% increase on the target pipeline, in the millions.
- 66% of article views delivered connections with influencers and decision makers.
- 74% engagement with priority contacts.

Timeframe:

- 10 months

b2bmarketing.net/earlystageabm

3. With the help of MomentumABM, SAP's 'Breaking down silos' campaign drove $14.9m of revenue with $500m in pipeline

Budget:

- $500,000 (USD)

Results:

- Drove $14.9m of revenue with $500m in pipeline
- Instigated over 24 C-level engagements
- Impacted over 250 accounts
- Provided insights across 30 strategic topics
- Delivered upwards of 150 engagement tactics to support accounts
- Supported nearly 100 sales and marketing colleagues.

Timeframe:

- 12 months

Section 4

Metrics and when to expect results



Section 4

Metrics and when to expect results

We've looked at basic costs and the timeframes associated in delivering ROI, but it's important to say that ABM is about much more than just securing revenue on investment. In fact, dogged focus on ROI can leave you blind to the many other benefits you should be recognising, celebrating and measuring against. This section is dedicated to those benefits, showing you what you should expect to see and when.

> *"The absolute key in keeping everyone interested in the programme is making sure you're not measuring the sale but the activity."*
>
> **Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners**

A word on ABM metrics

Most ABM practitioners adopt the method having realised that demand generation is no longer working for them. After years, or perhaps decades, of working in this way it is easy to fall back into old habits – particularly with regard to the shorter term expectations and results associated with demand generation.

The value of the pipeline you're influencing is important, but ABM is about building and profiting from stronger client relationships, which take time to develop. At least some of your stakeholders are likely to be impatient so it's important to show progress through a mix of both hard and soft metrics.

Think honestly about your sales cycles and the length of time it may take to close a deal – particularly a large deal with a new account. How can you demonstrate ABM's value before closing that big deal – and indeed if you don't? Soft metrics will show stakeholders the engagement you've secured, the additional information you have on the account and the relationships you've forged.

But you should also look at the internal benefits of ABM and what it's doing for your business at a foundational level. The divide between sales and marketing has long been a thorn in the sides of both parties – it's led to inefficiencies, confusion, delays and lost revenue. Yet the first benefit ABM practitioners start to see is a greater understanding and alignment between sales and marketing. That is something with long-term and far-reaching benefits for your company and it's something you should be showcasing.

> *"I don't believe a reorientation of sales targets is likely given that the existing expectations are typically quarterly and synchronise with the business' overarching financial reporting. However, marketing does need to understand how their counterparts in sales are being measured and rewarded and ensure there is an alignment of the ABM strategy.*
>
> *"The challenge of aligning ABM with quarterly results is a short-term one. Once ABM has proven its worth as a strategy that supports sustainable business growth, results will become apparent quarter by quarter. The current challenges are the symptom of ABM being new and getting the ball rolling."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, Lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-start programme.**

The most common ABM metrics

Our survey shows that the most common measurement of success in ABM is revenue (66%), shortly followed by pipeline in SQLs (65%). Of course, these are essential in charting ABM's overall success but it's likely to take time to hit these metrics. In the run up, you need to be looking at the foretellers of revenue, which are centered around engagement, relationships and teamwork.

Looking at these softer metrics, only 57% measure engagement in ABM content, and 43% the number of sales meetings. Yet there are other areas worthy of charting, including the valuable benefits ABM brings your company such as better alignment between sales and marketing (the most common benefit), clearer vision and better due diligence.

The least commonly used metric with regard to ABM efforts is the depth of account insight (18%), which is surprising given it's the biggest challenge ABM practitioners struggle with. Measure your efforts against this with clear responsibilities and targets and it's very likely to improve.

Shifting the mindset from demand generation to ABM

Using ABM to fix broken demand generation comes with the risk of not achieving either.

Here Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-start programme tells us what to looks out for.

"Don't look at ABM as a silver bullet, it's not a quick fix for broken demand generation. ABM is a long-term strategy that may require some business transformation to fully harness the benefits. Business strategies that best suit ABM include looking to create sustainable growth, enhanced CX, long-term loyalty, enhanced margins and customer advocacy," says Andy.

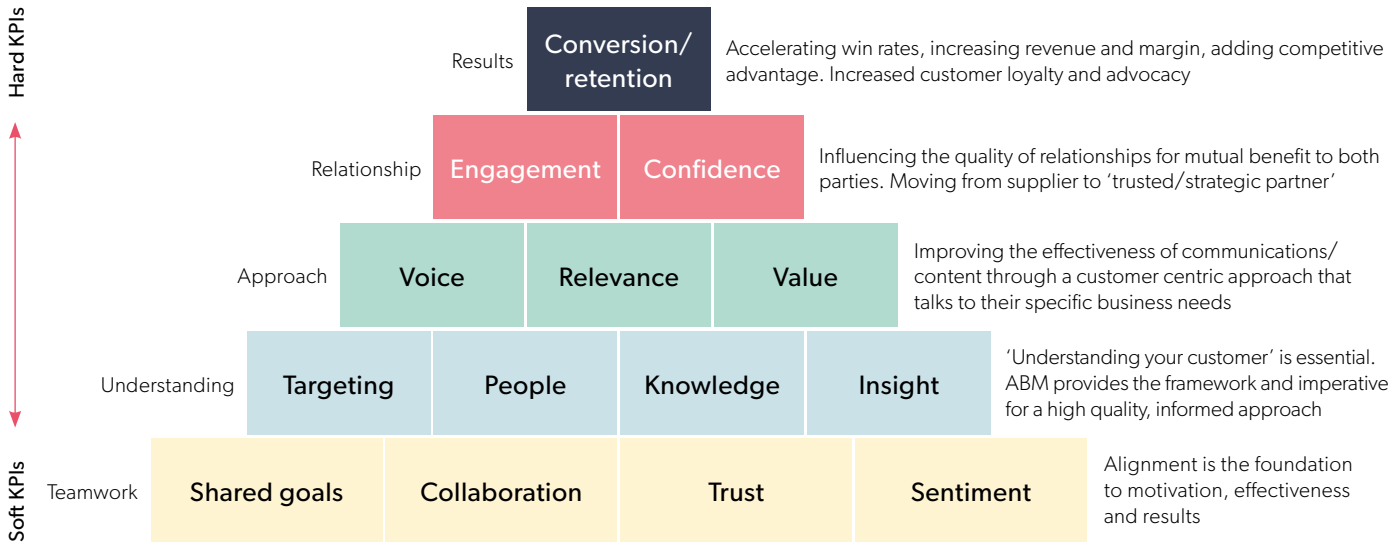
1. ABM is likely to be subject to inappropriate short-term demand gen oriented KPIs.

2. Teams are likely to fall back into their comfort zone of conventional approaches, which can short cut best practice and erode the benefits of ABM (i.e may skip investment in insight and resort to generic content).

3. Those of the demand gen mindset will typically adopt one-to-many (programmatic) ABM rather than strategic. This can become demand gen under a different name, seeking to take on too many accounts with a formal process.

4.2 ABM value pyramid

ABM drives transformation, adding incremental value across the entire GTM strategy. A new mix of hard and soft KPI's are critical to enable the value add measured at each stage. Conventional KPIs (as used for demand gen) fail to demonstrate the sustainable impact of ABM to the organisation.



Hard metrics

- Return on investment (ROI)
- Return on marketing investment (ROMI)
- Amount of sales/ revenue
- Pipeline/ number of SQLs
- Retention
- Improved win rates

Soft metrics

- Number of known contacts in the DMU
- Depth of account insight
- Engagement with ABM content
- Number of sales meetings
- Alignment with sales
- Clearer vision and goals
- More stringent due diligence

How do ABM practices stack up with these metrics?

Despite most having run their ABM programmes for six months or less, ABM practitioners are already seeing these early benefits:

- 54% of ABM practitioners are already seeing greater alignment between sales and marketing
- 39% have seen growth in their existing accounts
- 34% have seen improved win rates for new accounts
- 23% have seen improved customer retention.

4.3 When to expect results

The two timelines that follow give estimates for when you should expect to see results with regards to some key metrics, such as alignment, engagement, strategic goals, data and revenue.

The timeline covers your ABM pilot, time during which you can review and adapt your trial run, and your upscaling efforts. The darker the shade, the more results you should be seeing.

You will notice there are two timeframes, one covering new accounts and one covering existing ones. While there are multiple variables affecting these timeframes, these are the two most apparent ones. Simply, the more you already know about your account the quicker you can expect results.

Andy's advice: It's crucial not to oversell timeframes, especially to key stakeholders – better to under promise and over deliver. That can be hard when timeframes are markedly longer than traditional demand generation, so ensure you have realistic but also motivational measurements all across the sales cycle.

Timeline of deliverables for existing accounts

	Programme:	Pilot						Review and optimise						Scale					
	Month:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13-18+					
Phase	KPI/Deliverable																		
Preparation	Sales and marketing alignment																		
	Defined ABM vision/strategy/goals																		
	Account due diligence																		
	Account selection																		
	Account mapping (DMU ID)																		
Delivery	ABM goals aligned to sales account plans																		
	Account data/insight/intent available																		
	Bespoke value propositions developed																		
	Distribution of content/communications																		
Results	Engagement																		
	Pipeline opportunities identified/quantified																		
	Deals closing – revenue delivery																		

Timeline of deliverables for new accounts

	Programme:	Pilot						Review and optimise						Scale					
	Month:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13-18+					
Phase	**KPI/Deliverable**																		
Preparation	Sales and marketing alignment																		
	Defined ABM vision/strategy/goals																		
	Account due diligence																		
	Account selection																		
	Account mapping (DMU ID)																		
Delivery	ABM goals aligned to sales account plans																		
	Account data/insight/intent available																		
	Bespoke value propositions developed																		
	Distribution of content/communications																		
Results	Engagement																		
	Pipeline opportunities identified/quantified																		
	Deals closing – revenue delivery																		

4.4 The merits of metrics beyond ROI

Kate Owen, director of strategic marketing and industries and Michael Green, director of account management, both at Capita, discuss the merits of metrics beyond ROI.

Kate Owen, director, strategic marketing and industries at Capita

"You need to have patience. I remember listening to people speaking about how ABM had taken them five or six years. And I remember thinking 'can you imagine waiting that long to know if you'll see the value?' But patience is a virtue and it's massively overlooked by marketers. It's something I still struggle with because it goes against the DNA of a marketer and I want to get creative things out onto the market.

"I'm a massive believer in ROI and I can't spend any piece of my budget unless I can show the return we'll get on it. But there's a balance between long-term strategy and quick wins. You've got ROI in terms of revenue and growth, but actually there are softer indicative metrics, which in the early stages are what my team will be looking for. For me, the ultimate nirvana with ABM would be for people in my team to work with others as a joint unit. That's when I'll know we've truly been successful."

Capita's additional success metrics

- Uplift in face-to-face engagement versus emails
- Increased engagement with DMU members you've never had engagement with
- Production and engagement of industry or theme-aligned content
- Interaction with other key touchpoints, such as social
- Internal alignment across teams.

Michael Green, director of account management, Capita

"If you think about ROI you're driving yourself toward short-term thinking. ROI is tricky in these big customer relationships because there are a lot of levers to pull to get to the end result. It's sometimes quite tricky to ring-fence marketing activity and to say that it directly led to revenue; there's normally more than one factor at play.

"It's the milestones that matter in the early stages. It's about focusing on the performance on the account and then the results will come. I think ROI is a result of the longevity of that customer relationship. If you're keeping the customer for longer, you're selling to them for longer, they become an advocate and bring more customers. That's what we should be measuring in ABM."

4.5 ABM mission statements

An account-based marketing programme should always be built on a strong vision of what you want to realistically achieve with the resources you have. Every ABM programme will look different, but it's good to get a feel for what others are doing to help ensure you're on the right track.

Alias

ABM agency Alias sees a lot of clients come through its doors with ambitions of rolling out ABM. While every client is different, some common characteristics that can be drawn.

Type of company: Alias clients tend to be technology businesses with deals sometimes over $50m. Due to these high value deals, sales cycles tend to already work in long terms, which makes these companies suitable for ABM.

Type of ABM deployed: One-to-few is the most popular choice. However one-to-one is also used with some accounts.

Number of accounts: Anywhere between five and 50 accounts depending on the ABM. A solely one-to-few approach tends to serve up the 25 accounts.

Initial start date: Alias help clients set up ABM over what is typically a two month period.

Goals for ABM: Alias sets a benchmark aiming for at least 60:1 ROMI (measured through sales pipeline) on ABM programmes.

Expected timeline for achieving goals: Alias typically expects clients to start achieving their goals after 6-12 months of execution.

Budget for ABM: Budget differs depending on client but Alias always recommend starting an ABM programme on as little budget as you can. Once it's off the ground you can then consider further investment.

Staff allocated: ABM programmes tend to have a full time ABM manager as opposed to a marketer doing ABM on the side. With Alias, ABM managers work with an outsourced team of ABM strategists, data analysts, and content creators.

Capita

Type of company: Capita is a consulting, digital services and software company.

Type of ABM deployed: Capita takes a mixed approach with its new ABM programme. It focuses on top accounts, which get one-to-one ABM, then its next group of accounts, which are grouped by industry, for which it uses a one-to-few approach.

Initial start date: Capita has been conducting pockets of ABM informally, now the company is embarking on its first steps to set up a formal programme.

Goals for ABM: Its goals are to help key accounts understand how the breadth of Capita's services can add value to them. Often, clients only see part of an organisation – the one they work with day-to-day or have had immediate experience of. An organisation like Capita, has a breadth of solutions for companies going through transformation – across customer experience, learning and technology. It wanted to make sure clients are getting the best from them. It also wanted to show its deep industry expertise. It's starting by focusing on its strategic accounts, then will build from there.

Expected timeline for achieving goals: The ABM team are anticipating the 12 month cycle that is normally cited as part of ABM. In the meantime they are planning to use softer metrics to ensure activities are moving toward a positive outcome.

Staff allocated: It currently has a small, nimble but dedicated ABM team team, which it is building out. The aim is to have industry leads who each have a cluster of one to three accounts.

Its ABM team will focus on industry and key accounts only. It doesn't believe this is a "side of desk" activity and wants to cultivate skills, develop training and deploy ABM expertise.

SAS

Type of company: SAS is a business analytics software and services company.

Type of ABM deployed: SAS takes a mixed approach. Those that don't make the cut for the one-to-one will be passed to another team for a lighter approach.

Number of accounts: In total there are around 50 accounts that come into contact with ABM. However there are five accounts involved in the one-to-one approach.

Initial start date: SAS had been dabbling in ABM for a while, but in 2018 it created its first purely ABM role.

Goals for ABM: The aim of its programme is to drive focus on the company's most important customers as well as complement its separate strategic accounts programme.

How is this aligned with business strategy: The ABM programme is supported by the go-to-market strategy. All of SAS' programmes are aligned with the overarching business objective of focusing on the most important customers.

Expected timeline for achieving goals: SAS lock accounts into its one-to-one ABM for 12 months. If they don't see enough progress in this time, the account is swapped with a more promising one at the end of the 12 months.

Staff allocated: Five one-to-one accounts per ABMer.

Refinitiv

Type of company: Refinitiv is a financial data and technology company.

Type of ABM deployed: The ABM strategy takes a mixed approach of one-to-one and one-to-few.

Number of accounts: Approximately 40 strategic accounts.

Initial start date: The company had carried out a handful of successful ABM pilots. However, last year following a new CMO appointment and marketing restructure, a dedicated ABM team was formed.

Goals for ABM: The initial goal is to grow and retain a small selection of our existing most strategic accounts. However following success this will be expanded to include Refinitiv's top 40 strategic accounts.

Expected timeline for achieving goals: The ABM team have dedicated this year to setting up the function and demonstrating the value ABM can deliver with the initial accounts. It's then planning to scale next year.

Staff allocated: Refinitiv has a dedicated ABM team of nine full-time employees with a global head of account-based marketing and marketing directors and specialists in the US and EMEA.

BT

Type of company: BT is a telecommunications company. It has multiple arms of the business, which has a global reach.

Type of ABM deployed: One-to-one and one-to-few.

Number of accounts: 150 accounts.

Initial start date: 2013

Goals for ABM: The programme started with the aim of attracting new business, it has now expanded to also work on retaining and growing established relationships.

Results: As BT's programme has been running long enough that it's been able to see substantial results. These include a 20%-30% conversion rate.

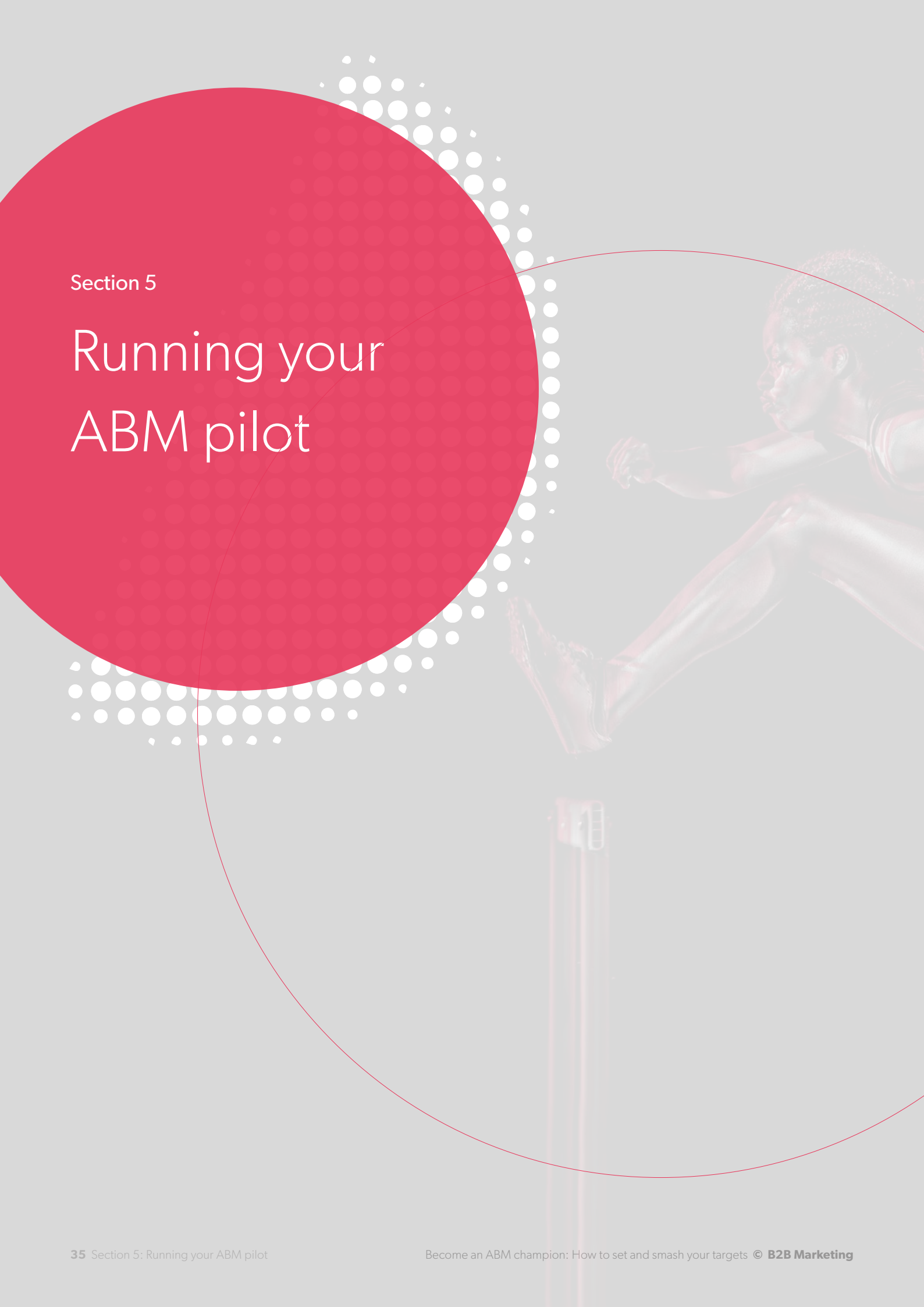
How is this aligned with business strategy: The business targets global multinational corporates that have multiple divisions across numerous continents. ABM aligns this because it allows the company to get a better grip on the differing processes and political landscapes of conglomerates, to make BT's marketing more relevant.

Staff allocated: 15 ABMers.

Find out how BT's head of ABM Adrian Hardy overcame the difficulties of aligning the sales team here.

Section 5

Running your ABM pilot



Section 5

Running your ABM pilot

Your pilot needs to be long enough to deliver results but short enough to ensure you can act on the results and pivot accordingly. Around six months should give you enough time to bed-in a short project with focused goals and deliver on two or three engagement-based metrics.

One objective of your pilot should be to refine your future approach to ABM. Few seasoned account-based marketers would claim to have nailed their approach first time. The pilot should find out what works for your team and accounts, and what doesn't.

Selecting too many accounts can leave you too stretched and time poor to do justice to the personal approach ABM requires. If your pilot is successful and the programme has been established, that's when you can start to scale up the programme up.

> *"The purpose of the pilot should be to benchmark what has been achieved and by when. You upscale when you begin to demonstrate improved performance having learnt and optimised the programme."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor, B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme**

For more information o n running an ABM pilot, go to b2bmarketing.net/abmpilot

How to tackle 3 common objections during the pilot

Before you start your pilot, you should be ready to address any objections the sales team has. Take their worries seriously, and show that you're working towards the same goals. Here are three common ones:

- **"We'll get fewer opportunities"**

  Rebuttal: It's true that ABM usually focuses on fewer opportunities, but every single one that you'll hand over to sales will be highly-qualified; that means they won't be wasting time on poor, unqualified leads anymore.

- **"It's too complex and won't work"**

  Rebuttal: ABM is a proven strategy with high ROI. Share case studies and statistics of successful ABM initiatives in industries that are relevant to your project. This will help you demonstrate how and why it works.

- **"We don't have enough time/resources"**

  Rebuttal: Make your pilot just big enough for your team to handle; it's usually better to deliver a smaller project in collaboration with sales than to push something bigger without them fully invested.

The B2B Marketing Pilot ABM Framework

Kick off

Complete your readiness diagnositic: Is ABM right for your business? Which approach is best? What are your aspirations? What will you need & what tools/ resource do you already have?

Month 1-3

The following areas will vary depending on your approach (1-2-1/ 1-2-few/ 1-2-many), the number of accounts you've selected and your budget. Initial investment in each area should be limited and with a provable value.

Alignment: Define your ABM team including sales, marketing and others. Find senior ABM advocates (which must include sales). Pitch achievable but impressive objectives and timeframes

Data and insight: Pool and clean existing account information, assess what's missing.

Account selection: Together with sales, pick your key accounts based on their value, accessibility and your relationship with them

Technology: Audit your tech including requirements but keep investment low. Focus on full utilisation of your CRM and MA systems.

Month 3-6

During months 3-6 there should be a focus on progress tracking & metric, while still keeping momentum on the work delivered in months 1-3.

Alignment: Keep stakeholders on track with progress reports and identifiable milestones.

Data and insight: Fill the blanks in your account information with detailed third-party insight

Account selection: Assess your accounts – have you chosen too many or ones that are too hard to access? Filter if need be.

Programme and content execution: Create and deliver highly targeted and bespoke creative, focusing on channels of distribution.

Month 6

Upscale: You're ready to upscale by repeating this process on more/ larger acccounts. Use previous success to secure additional budget and resource.

Case study

How MOI helped Genesys win business with one-to-one ABM

About Genesys

Genesys sells customer experience and call centre technology to mid-sized and large businesses. It sells both cloud-based and on-premises software.

Objectives

- Drive engagement within the prospect's UK account
- Gain insights into key challenges and buying triggers
- Establish Genesys as a CX leader and build prospect relationships
- Displace the prospect's UK CX partner
- Drive $2.5 million pipeline



> *"Thanks to MOI, I was able to get in front of people I'd been struggling to for ages. With a global hat on, it was hard for me to dedicate lots of time purely to the UK&I but they helped make me present 10-fold! Their understanding of us as a business, our core objectives and the quality they delivered was awesome. Love it."*
>
> **Global sales account director**

Media, channels and techniques used

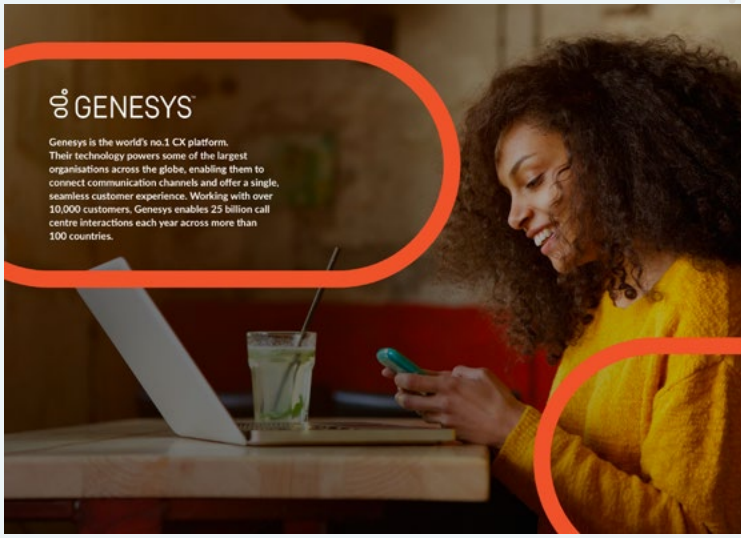
MOI's response was an integrated ABM campaign that prioritised account engagement and asserted Genesys as a leader in the CX space. A five-step ABM framework gave the campaign a solid foundation and guided Genesys from preparation right through to measurement.

The process started by identifying those with the highest propensity to buy. Through meticulous profiling, 190 prospects were selected for one-to-one engagement.

Personalisation was key to the campaign. That started with in-depth research during the planning stage, deep diving into the topics that were important to

prospects using a combination of social listening and market analysis. A social selling strategy was established, which would ensure all communications were tailored to individual prospects. It put in place an 80:20 split across all communications, whereby 20% of all eDMs, DMs, emails, and other messages were personalised.

MOI and Genesys also crafted assets that would be highly relevant to our prospects. The most successful example was content created after attending a client workshop organised by Genesys. The workshop united regional heads from across Europe, who discussed the various challenges different regions where facing – particularly regarding the prospect's ambitious '2020 Strategy.' These insights were used to create a dynamic report and ebook that unlike sterile corporate assets was highly relevant, addressing challenges.



Timescales

- **April 2018: Preparation and planning January**

  Kick off workshop with the prospect's account director and the wider Genesys team

  Social selling interview to create an ongoing LinkedIn content calendar

- **April 2018: Prioritisation**

  Identification of key stakeholders and priority targets

- **May 2018: Planning**

  Development of ongoing content calendar and Pulse articles for LinkedIn calendar of activity created

Execution

- **May 2018:** Set content calendar live
- **May 2018:** Engagement with new connections
- **June 2018:** Invitation to prospect's regional workshop (email & LinkedIn)
- **August 2018:** Prospect's Regional Workshop
- **September 2018:** Post-event content creation (sent as a DM)
- **September 2018:** Email nurture set-up
- **November 2018:** Webinar
- **January 2019:** Video to the prospect from Genesys' CEO
- **March 2019:** Customer Day, including workshop and dinner

Budget:

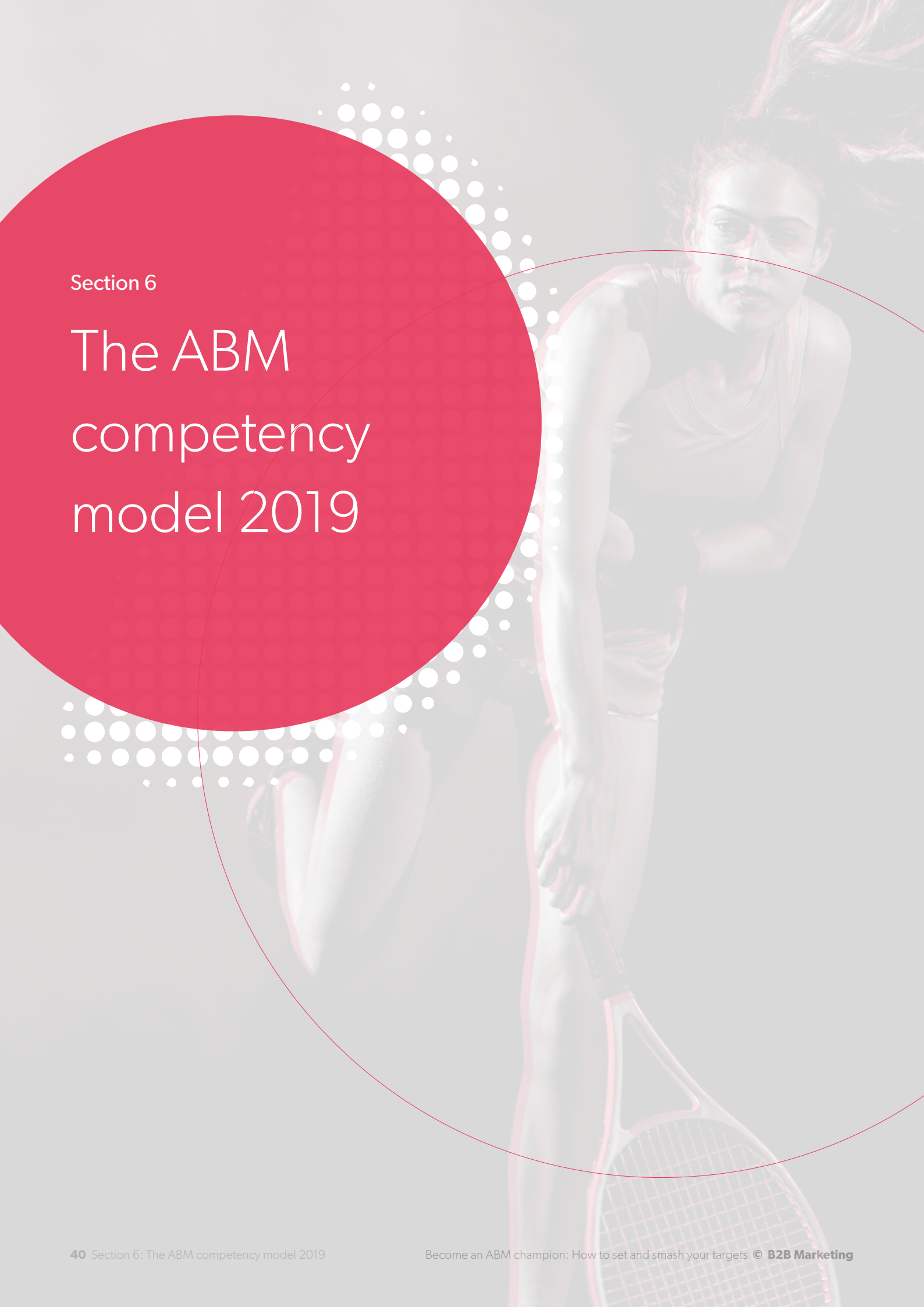
- Planning £4,400
- Content creation £13,600
- Distribution (inc microsite) £5,300
- Social selling (inc predictive marketing tool) £11,450
- Events £6,400
- Data £800
- TOTAL £41,950

Results:

Genesys won the client, stealing them from its former prefered supplier. Not only that, Genesys outperformed its targets many times over with pipeline, article views and engagement with priority contacts.

Section 6

The ABM competency model 2019



Section 6

The ABM competency model 2019

In the following pages, we present The ABM Competency Model 2019, an updated version of the models we've published for the past two years. The data within it shows where over 300 ABM practitioners are with regard to the delivery of their programmes. As well as demonstrating the work involved in ABM's delivery, it represents where B2B marketers are progressing and where they are struggling to do so. Lastly, it provides you with the means to benchmark yourselves against the market average and chart your next steps ahead.

This model allows you to:

- Assess the work involved in ABM's delivery
- Review how far your ABM peers and colleagues have progressed
- Compare your aptitude with other ABM practitioners
- Determine your next steps.

This model demonstrates everything you will master as you become proficient in ABM. It maps that across five stages, taking into consideration the five main aspects of ABM's delivery.

The five elements of delivery

1. Internal alignment
2. Account definition
3. Data and insight
4. Technology
5. Programme and content execution.

The five stages of delivery

1. Defining
2. Planning
3. Implementing
4. Upscaling
5. Perfecting.

Highlights from this year's ABM Competency Model

Over the past year the greatest amount of collective improvement has been in the way sales and marketing select and define their accounts (moving from stage 1 to 3). Marginal improvement has been delivered with regard to sales and marketing alignment (last year, most ABMers ranked themselves at stage 2, this year, they have progressed slightly to stage 2.5).

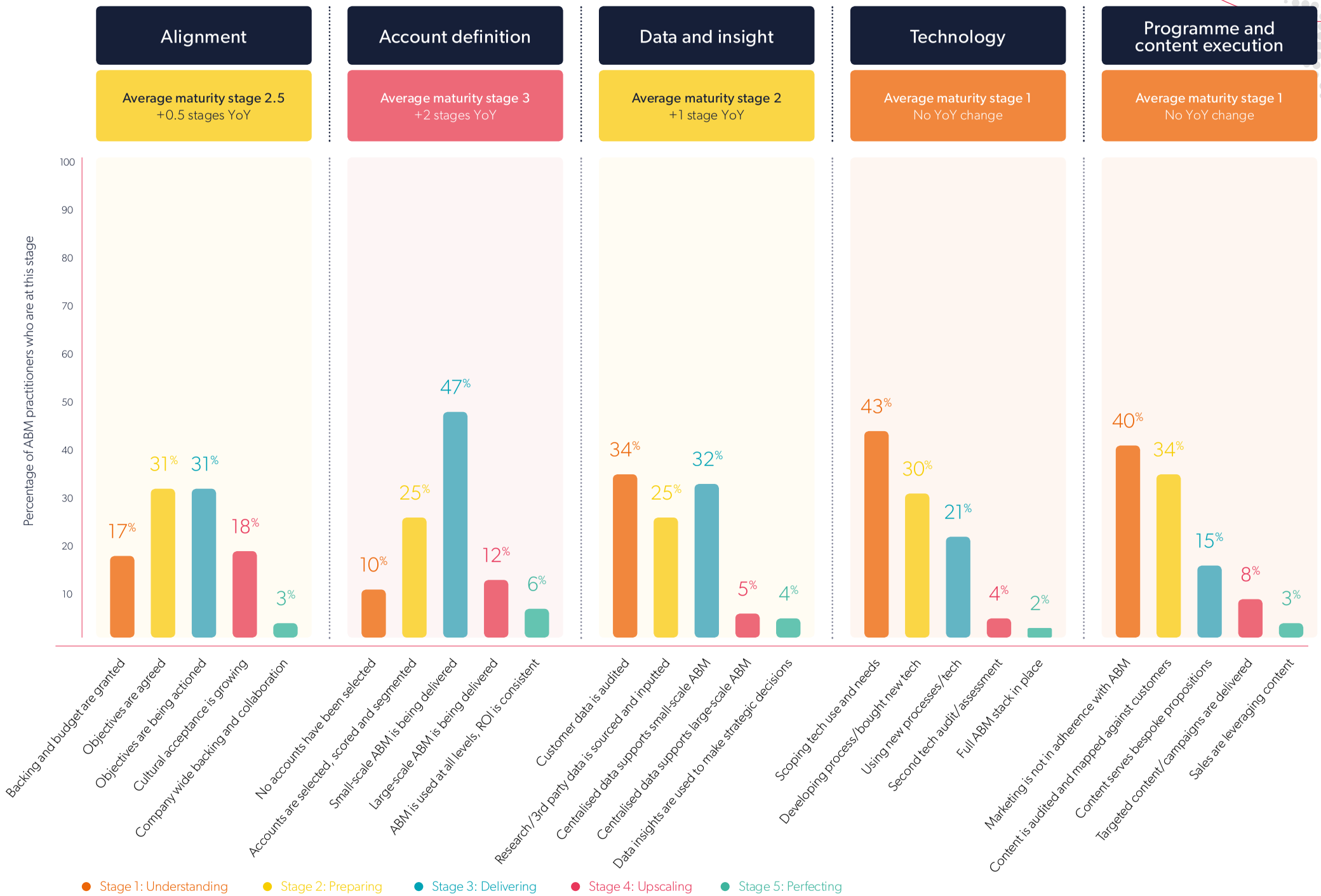
In all three other areas, there has been no marked improvement over the past 12 months – although it should be noted that while the largest pool of people (34%) are at still at stage one with regard to data and insight, almost the same amount (33%) place themselves at stage three. (Creating an average of 2, up one stage).

Overall it's clear that collective improvements have been made, and while there is sluggishness in certain areas (namely technology and programme execution), it's to be expected considering those aspects of ABM are typically addressed later in the programme's delivery.

Furthermore, as we examine elsewhere in the report, despite most ABM programmes being in their infancy, a sizeable amount of benefits have been seen, including ROI and softer metrics.

> *"Rome wasn't built in a day! For some organisations ABM represents a wholesale change – some would say it's an entire cultural shift, which is good. This transformation can be complex so unsurprisingly many are feeling their way and crossing bridges as they come to them."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start Programme**

The ABM Competency Model 2019



Section 7

The essential elements



7.1 Internal alignment

Internal alignment starts with key stakeholder buy-in from your marketing team, sales, executives and the board. Once you have secured this (and that is no easy feat in itself), the majority of your efforts will be to maintain your understanding and alliance with sales. Friction between you will have an affect on your performance.

Where are my peers on alignment?
Stage 2.5: Preparing

The largest proportion of ABMers (62%) are evenly spread between stages 2 and 3 of their alignment around ABM. This means board support has been granted, objectives and resource have been agreed and sales and marketing are working towards collaborative delivery of those objectives.

> *"One of the main reasons ABM programmes take longer to see ROI is a lack of alignment between sales and marketing. Even if they may have been brought in by marketing, sales needs to be just as aware of what ABM is. The key is making sure that sales are included earlier."*
>
> **Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners**

The 5 stages of alignment in ABM

Stage 1 (Understanding):
Backing and budget are granted

Stage 2 (Preparing):
Objectives are agreed

Stage 3 (Delivering):
Objectives are being actioned

Stage 4 (Upscaling):
Cultural acceptance is growing

Stage 5 (Perfecting):
Company-wide backing and collaboration

Proper alignment comes from formal agreements and processes

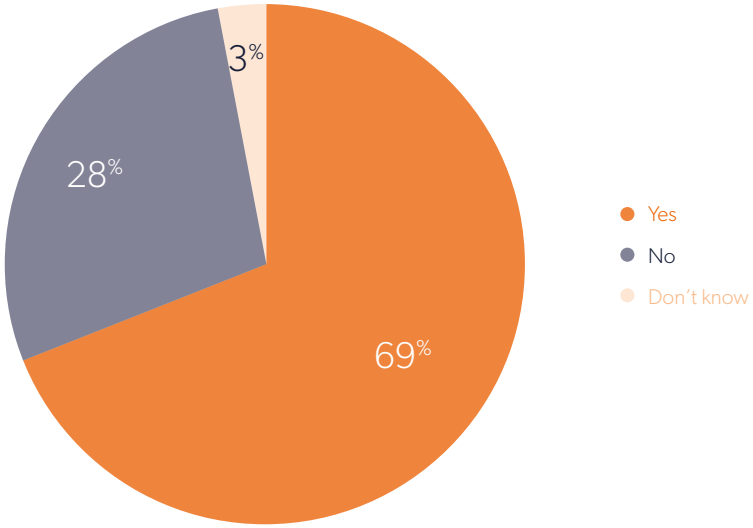
Alignment with sales isn't just about being friendly, quite the contrary – it needs to be underpinned with formal agreements and processes. The most important of these are a key account programme, aligned targets and incentives and a service level agreement (SLA).

Of the ABM practitioners we spoke to, 69% are working alongside a formal key account programme, which is of course the perfect place to start your account selection.

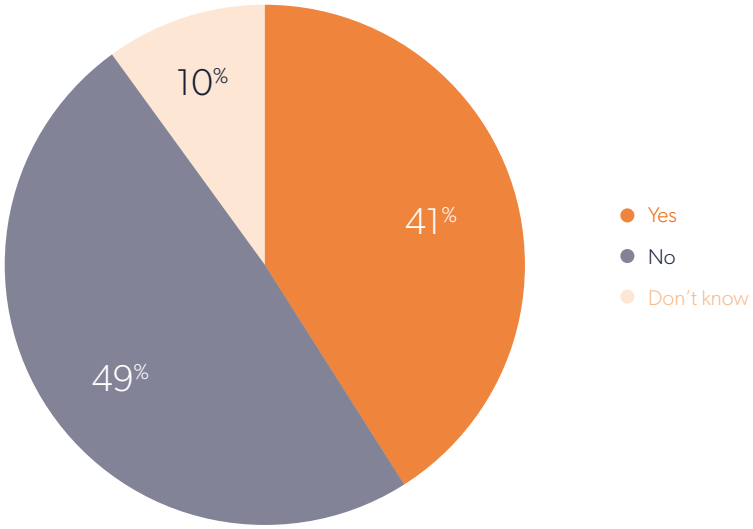
> *"ABM is significantly easier and faster to implement as an overlay to a formal key account management programme. It means sales are already aligned to clearly identified strategic accounts, usually with a clearly defined sales account plan."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start programme**

In only 41% of the cases does the sales team have targets and incentives aligned with ABM. With sales (and indeed the board) often working to quarterly targets, and ABM to annual sales cycles, it can be very hard to align targets – tempting, in fact, to avoid it completely. Where sales are fully bought into the programme it's unlikely you'll need to incentivise them to update data, or act on marketing intel – these soft targets can be hit with a carrot or a stick. However, ABM is a marketing and sales initiatives, so if you're not presenting that to the board with shared targets, are you really showing a united front?

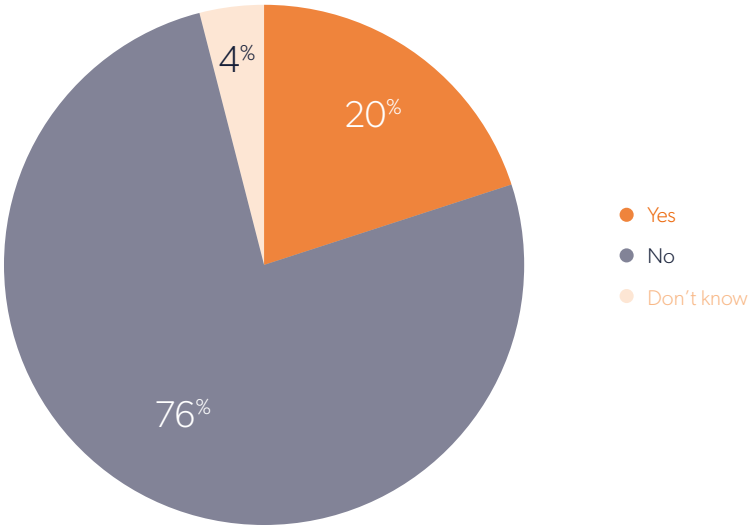
Does your sales team practice a key account programme?



Are your sales team's targets and incentives aligned to ABM?



Do you have a service level agreement on ABM between sales and marketing?



Most worrying from our intel on sales and marketing alignment is that 76% don't have a formal service level agreement on ABM. Without these both parties have nothing to fall back on if they feel their promises haven't been delivered. Lack of a formal process also creates a breeding ground for misinterpretation, confusion and ultimately disagreement.

How to profile and segment your sales team for better alignment

In the following section, we showcase how two major players in ABM have used personality profiling and ABM techniques to win over their sales team and other key stakeholders to secure greater alignment.

How Myers Briggs helped Adrian Hardy, head of global ABM marketing, BT understand his sales team

When Adrian started his ABM initiative six years ago, sales saw him as a different breed – and one that was trying to suck up their time. Driven by a desire to help sales rather than deliver results, his initial efforts fell flat. He used personality profiling, together with ABM techniques, to win over his sales team and deliver 20%-30% higher conversion rate.

"The team I went into were some of the scariest people I've ever worked with. Their personal circumstances relied on bringing in enough sales to hit their bonuses, so they didn't suffer fools lightly. You tended to get one chance with them and that was your lot," says Adrian.

"In our first team meeting I said we needed to be doing ABM in some accounts. I got a hostile reaction. The common response was 'I don't have the time'."

Adrian used ABM techniques to market the project to sales, and with knowledge of what they valued, he could translate his idea into their language. He also incorporated the sales team's 'all-about-the-now' attitude by focusing on what needed to be done in the short-term, rather than setting emphasis on the long-term.

"The sales team were focusing on big revenue targets in EMEA, and I was focusing on the number of new contacts and opportunities created. They were in a similar line, and you could see how they would lead to the same conclusion, but I wasn't talking in the same language by putting the numbers first," explains Adrian.

To tackle this, he used the same approach as he would an external account-based marketing campaign. He researched his target accounts, looking at Myers Briggs to uncover their personality traits. He also deciphered the traits of his marketing team, making him able to compare the similarities and differences that would determine his next step.

From this research Adrian came to a few conclusions about the differences between sales and marketing:

- Sales are thinking, marketing is feeling.
- Sales like objective principles, marketing like causes and motivation.
- Sales like facts, judging and pre-empting, marketing like being flexible and creative.

As momentum grew, more people of seniority began attending the ABM meetings. Adrian went from the add-on in the sales meeting, to the ABM guru people want to listen to. "I got an email from John (the head of the sales) saying 'congratulations you're no longer the colouring in department. You're the lighting up department," says Adrian.

Six years on and BT now has BT has around 15 ABMers working on approximately 150 accounts.

Read more at b2bmarketing.net/insidebtabm

The personality disconnect

Adrian researched the typical personality traits of both sales and marketing as defined by the commonly used personality profile, Myers Briggs.

Sales = ENFJ
ENFJs are objective, driven by truth and logic. They are organised and structured, driven to hit deadlines and gain closure.

Marketing = ENTP
ENTP are motivated by feelings, intent on personalising the world by relating it to others. From an ENFJs (sales) perspective, ENTP (marketing) are prone to procrastination, that's because they prefer flexible learning environments and are likely motivated more by new ideas than old plans.

Adrian's advice on aligning with sales

Quantify sales' involvement

- Expected hours per week
- Expected tasks
- Cost of failure
- Agree frequency of review
- Agree reporting method and audience
- Agree closure

How to engage with sales

- Never 'do sales enablement' to sales: Listen to what won't work and why
- Do use internal comms channels: Promote every engagement, use pictures, report outcomes
- Do get sales to promote the final outcome and recommend you to others.

How Accenture's ABM lead Rhiannon Blackwell segmented and profiled her key stakeholders.

Accenture's account-based marketing programme has formally run for three years, having previously been carried out ad hoc. It's now one of the leaders in the discipline and has improved win rates by up to 18%.

ABM team:
Eight marketers led by Rhiannon Blackwell
Approach:
Strategic one-to-one ABM
Number of accounts:
20 accounts across five industry groups

"Whatever job you do you're going to run into different types of people," says Rhiannon. "You have to be able to understand how different people work and communicate, so you can better work with them and get the outcomes you both want."

Rhiannon and her team identified four personality types, each of which presented unique challenges in regard to collaboration. Here are those personality types, along with some advice for Rhiannon on how to work with them.

Debbie Downer
This persona represents the person who is always negative about everything you present.

Suggestion: *Demonstrate ABM's worth through other sales advocates and examples of success, recognising that it will take time.*

Busy Ben
This persona really wants to do ABM but is too busy running around doing everything else. You've got their buy-in but not their time.

Suggestion: *Make ABM easy with customisable content tool kits and clear reporting.*

Kenny Keano
Kenny loves ABM and wants to dive in head first. However while they want everything you have to offer right, they most likely do not have the resources, budget and understanding.

Suggestion: *Be detailed in your approach with Kenny as he may wish to rush ahead. However this ensures some quick wins to avoid losing enthusiasm over time.*

Olivia Over-analyser
Olivia leaves nothing unscrutinised. She wants all the data and needs time to analyse it before giving the green light to anything.

Suggestion: *Olivia feels protective of her accounts, work in a way that respects this while also gaining incremental trust.*

Read more at b2bmarketing.net/accentureabm

7.2 Account definition

Our survey shows that ABM practitioners are more advanced in their account selection process than any other of the five elements. This is unsurprising given that without accounts you've nothing to practice ABM on. But have people selected the right accounts, and if so what process did they take to get there? Here we take a look.

Where are my peers in account definition?

Stage 3: Delivering

At 45%, the largest group of ABMers are at stage 3 of their account selection process. They are more advanced here than in any other aspect of ABM. This means they have selected, scored and segmented their accounts and are delivering small scale ABM.

> *"Where I've been asked to help stalled ABM campaigns, the cause is invariably down to choosing the wrong accounts for the wrong reasons. I personally advocate focussing on existing accounts first as the anecdotal evidence from our advisory clients is that this has proven to be the fastest and easiest place to start."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-start programme**

The 5 stages of account definition in ABM

Stage 1 (Understanding):
No accounts have been selected

Stage 2 (Preparing):
Accounts are selected, scored and segmented

Stage 3 (Delivering):
Small-scale ABM is being delivered

Stage 4 (Upscaling):
Large-scale ABM is being delivered

Stage 5 (Perfecting):
ABM is used at all levels. ROI is consistent

A word on account selection

Most ABM practitioners are delivering small-scale ABM having selected a number of choice accounts. This year there is a slight preference for the larger pool of accounts that one-to-few (versus one-to-one) offers. This is because a larger pool of accounts – although meaning more work – increases the chance of securing deals.

But of course, the best chance you've got of winning those deals is not really the number of accounts but the quality of them. As we discussed in last year's ABM report: *Early stage ABM: Plotting your route to success*, where most programmes fail is during the account selection processes. At best a lack of account due diligence will slow down your delivery. At worst, it means no results, friction between stakeholders and a loss of belief in ABM.

Even those who are delivering programmes on their selected accounts should regularly assess those choices through a rigorous process, which we'll look at later.

5 essential questions when selecting your accounts

- What's the potential value of the account?
- Is there a competitive threat?
- How engaged have they been in previous activities?
- What revenue opportunities are in the pipeline?
- Is the sales account manager open to ABM and working with marketing?

> *"We chose an account that had really clear business objectives and had stakeholders we knew would give us the time and investment we needed from them."*
>
> **Rhiannon Blackwell, ABM lead, Accenture**

Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners discusses the collaborative environment needed for successful account selection

> *"You really do have to focus on your account selection. I think it's about having the fewest eggs in the smallest basket. We call it the 'minimal viable number.' Rather than focusing on the budget, we look at the smallest number of accounts we need to prove ROI and base our selection on that.*
>
> *Sales are absolutely the driver of the accounts we go after. They are the ones who know. Having said that, there's always the potential for sales to go after their own accounts and give marketing the green fields and net new logos, like marketing has got some magic way of converting the accounts they couldn't. That can't be the case, it's really important that sales and marketing work together.*
>
> *Defining the value of an account starts with selecting the offering and talking to sales about their previous experiences. Identify the deals they've done and their true value. What other deals have they done in that space? Was there an up-sell on those accounts? You need to look not just at the annual value but the total customer value. You really want to do your research into the accounts; develop a customer profile, find look-a-like accounts and establish intent. It's key to work out the propensity of your accounts because any waste in ABM is expensive – spending money on accounts that aren't going convert is expensive.*
>
> *In short, sales identify the accounts and marketing collaboratively establish whether those accounts have a high propensity to convert. But ultimately it's data that makes the final decision."*

The ABM Account Selection Tool

During the early stages of ABM, sales may be averse to giving marketing their best accounts, worried they might mess it up. Instead they may try to pass marketing the hard-to-reach accounts – ones with a lot of potential but also a lot of challenges. Conversely, sales may be highly motivated by ABM, in which case they may load marketing with too many accounts and simply engulf the programme.

This is why ABM practitioners need a clear account selection tool that removes subjectivity and the muddiness of internal politics.

Lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start programme, Andy Bacon, advocates such a methodology, he uses it with members of the ABM Head-Start Programme in order to assess and select their accounts.

The qualification tool, which takes about 30 mins to complete per account, allows sales and marketing to rank accounts across 20 key areas, all of which are segmented into three categories: Opportunity, challenge and alignment.

Opportunity: This section assesses the value of an account in terms of areas such as their spend, access to their DMU and the factors that may affect their purchase decision.

Challenge: The second area qualifies blockers in the way of a sale, such as competitive activity, the customer's budget and current state of satisfaction.

Alignment: The final section reviews the relationship with the account, and the sales person attributed to it. This is through qualifying questions covering areas such as existing mandates and marketing's current participation with sales.

Each one of the 20 areas is given a score out of five (showing how accurately the account fits the desired attribute) and a percentage weighting, showing its importance to the programme.

Collectively, an account worthy of inclusion in an ABM programme usually needs to receive a weighted score of no less than 75%. When implementing ABM for the first time it's uncommon for all of this information to be either known, or the evidence readily available. The tool therefore identifies the need for further account research – important due-diligence that mitigates risk by ensuring an account is viable.

Don't be tempted to include accounts that are ranked lower than 75% – even if you have space in your programme. Instead, use this scoring tool to assess which second tier accounts need more work before they can qualify for ABM.

Andy's advice:

Andy advises members of the ABM Head-Start programme to assess a known, high-value account with his model. This allows all parties access to a benchmark from which they can compare other accounts.

Another way to ensure consistency and fairness in scoring is to ask individuals to score an existing account on their own, then collectively compare and correct the range of variance.

Account scoring in practice

SAS' account selection process

Rachel Tait, head of ABM UK&I at SAS shares her team's account selection and reviewing process

"We have an account-scoring model, which looks at revenue, relationship and reputation. We also look at spend, the opportunity for that and engagement. Finally, we look at our internal team make up. It's quite a big model so the decisions that go into it when an account is enrolled in the programme is quite a big ask.

We run three-hour insight and research sessions for anyone that touches an account. That includes marketing, the account team, pre-sales and customer services. We go through the current state of the account, what's happening, where we'd like to get to in the future. Really mapping out all areas of the account.

It's a strict and thorough process. A new account comes into the programme for 12 months, after that period – which we call 'the transfer window' – we assess the whole process again and make sure the accounts are correct. We question whether they need to be taken out and whether others should come in. Then it gets locked again for another 12 months."

Refinitiv's account selection process

The ABM team at Refinitiv has been running a series of successful ABM pilots, including some targeting banks in Asia. Marketing director Kate Tomlinson shares its account selection process.

"This is our first year, so it's not as smooth a process as it's going to be in the future. What will help going forward is our new account selection criteria," says Kate. Like the ABM Account Selection Tool overleaf, Refinitiv's account selection process also divides account criteria into three stages.

Stage 1

Kate and the team assess whether the account represents an opportunity. "For example, they might spend a lot in the category we're selling in but not necessarily with us," says Kate. "Or we might know there's something coming up with the account that we can prepare for and meet that demand when it arises."

Stage 2

Once an opportunity has been outlined, the Refinitiv team assess the likelihood of achieving it. "How does the account view us? Do they see us as a strategic partner? Is there any upcoming budget or purchasing plans – or are they in cost-saving mode?" Kate questions.

Stage 3

Lastly, Refinitiv investigates whether it has the necessary resources to target the account i.e. buy-in from the specific account managers. "Provided we think these are good accounts to work with, do we then think we've got co-operation from colleagues we'll need to work with? Do they see the value in ABM? And are they willing to dedicate their time and resources to this?" asks Kate.

7.3 Data and insight

On average ABM practitioners are at stage 2 of their data and insight collation, but in reality most are either stuck at stage one (auditing), or have leap-frogged to stage three (delivering ABM). Either way, this area requires a lot of investment in terms of time, resource and in some cases, cost. The issue stretches beyond ABM, which is why in the section that follows we'll discuss how you can roll this into the greater business goals and efforts.

Where are my peers in account definition?

Stage 2: Preparing

On average, most ABMers are at stage 2 of their data and insight delivery, that's because the two largest groups are either side with 34% at stage 1 (where they are auditing their existing data) and 33% at stage 3 (delivering small-scale ABM through the use of centralised data).

> *"Often the first party data we need for ABM is siloed or difficult to access. It can often take longer to locate, access and assimilate than expected, especially because many think this will be the easy bit! Once you have identified what you do know it can then take a while to establish the known unknowns. Deep account insight of the kind that really makes a difference does require an investment – it's why I advocate an initial pilot of a few accounts to keep everything manageable."*
>
> **Andy Bacon, lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-start programme**

The 5 stages of data and insight in ABM

Stage 1 (Understanding):
Customer data is audited

Stage 2 (Preparing):
Research /third party data is sourced and inputted

Stage 3 (Delivering):
Centralised data supports small-scale ABM

Stage 4 (Upscaling):
Centralised data supports large-scale ABM

Stage 5 (Perfecting):
Data insights are used to make strategic decisions

A word on data and insight

As efforts into ABM data collation continue, we believe one of the main benefits discussed will be the joy of having clean, organised and vetted data. It's a benefit that will extend beyond ABM practitioners to optimise the whole business, improving efficiencies, insights and activities.

Both this year and last, data has been ABM practitioners' biggest challenge. But let's be honest, the problem exists independent of ABM. For many years we have invited data into our organisations at a quicker rate than we could process or properly analyse. This means the information we have is messy, in duplicate, incomplete and so vast it feels an overwhelmingly large task to fix it all. It's a positive thing that ABM is now a catalyst to improve all of this.

Yet it is a tall order. It's no surprise practitioners are struggling, but it is a surprise that so few of them pitch this task within the context of the business' long-term needs.

Ask yourself the following:

- Can you pitch ABM's data needs under a wider business case?
- Who and what else would this data cleanse benefit?
- Are there other projects or supporters you can bring in as allies?
- Could you secure more funding or resource with the above business case and allies?
- Are there other departments or individual with the internal skills to help you on this?

7 steps to master during your data and insight collation

Your account selection

The first thing you should consider with regards to your data is actually your account selection process. The more you know about your existing accounts and the more scrupulous you are in your vetting process, the easier your data collection will be.

Also the fewer accounts the easier this challenge will be. While slightly more practitioners now prefer one-to-few over one-to-one ABM, there are still ways to limit the number of accounts you pick - foremost, again you must be scrupulous. Secondly, you should always run a limited-sized pilot to test and learn.

The data you collect

If you don't already know what information you'll need on each of your accounts, the abridged list below gives an outline. Last year's B2B Marketing ABM report lists the full data set, a relevant excerpt from which you can find here b2bmarketing.net/abmdatainsight

- **Firmographic:** Company size, revenue, industry and location
- **Intent data:** Search topic, event attendance, downloads and ad clicks
- **Engagement data:** Web analytics, LinkedIn, Engagio, sales feedback
- **Account intel:** Business model, financial results, strategic priorities, culture
- **DMU information:** Organisational structure, DMU members, influencers, purchase history
- **Buyer personas:** Seniority and influence, personality type, interests and challenges.

The use of third-party data providers

Using a third-party data providers can save you a great deal of time and frustration and significantly speed up your ABM programme. There are data providers that specialise in specific geographies, industries and size of organisations.

These providers can help you source the essential information you need on your accounts, but it's you and your team to get your hands dirty digging through it.

Centralising your data

If you can't centralise your data on each account – capturing their needs and activity, as well as your own – any attempt at ABM will be significantly undermined. The easiest way to accomplish this is through the use of a marketing automation system, or customer relationship management system. While these platforms are typically already owned and used by both marketing and sales, they're often used in an ad hoc way, which allows people into input messy, and duplicate data. Agree and be firm of your processes for this. An SLA is a good idea.

The use of data platforms

If you're using multiple systems outside of your MA and CRM – such as social media management tools and website personalisation engines – you run the risk of creating disjointed data where contact activity is miss-matched across multiple account records.

Data management platforms are a way to merge account information across separate systems while still maintaining them. You may wish to consider whether enabling this function for your sales team will have any negative results, if so should arrange sales training and documented agreements.

Taking actions from your insight

Once you've logged all of the 'basic' data per account (as detailed in the link above) you can move to the next step of analysing it. Start by asking:

- How many contacts do you have in your target accounts - and what quality?
- Which accounts and contacts share the same characteristics?
- Which contacts are responding to your ABM activity?
- What content are they engaging with and when?

> *"Once you've got people on your site and you're delivering content, look at whether that resulted in better awareness. Is it speeding up the process or producing more opportunities?"*
>
> **Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners**

Persona-led content

You may wish to identify one or two personas – personality types that represent key people in your accounts' decision making unit (DMU), segmenting by things such as their seniority, challenges or geography, rather than by the business. From here you can create bespoke content solutions.

7.4 Technology

Technology is a wonderful tool for ABM's delivery. Although the early stages ABM can be carried out almost entirely independent of tech, it's prudent to scope out the opportunities tech vendors provide and how others are deploying them.

Where are my peers in account definition?

Stage 1: Understanding

The largest group (43%) are at stage 1 of their ABM technology development. That means they're simply scoping their existing tech and their needs. This is both unsurprising and wise, given that most ABM practitioners are in the early stages of their programme; unless you're running one-to-many (programmatic) buying new tech isn't advisable until you've delivered results.

> *"For now, we've been using the platforms and tools that we already had. They turned out to be quite compatible. Essentially, I think that strategy should drive technology, not the other way around."*
>
> **David De Smedt, European marketing and communications manager, DS Smith**

The 5 stages of technology in ABM

Stage 1 (Understanding):
Scoping tech use and needs

Stage 2 (Preparing):
Developing processes/ buying essential new tech

Stage 3 (Delivering):
Using new processes and tech

Stage 4 (Upscaling):
Second tech audit/ assessment

Stage 5 (Perfecting):
Full ABM tech stack in place

A word on ABM tech

There's certainly a buzz in the ABM tech sphere – not yet from customers but from vendors gearing up to support their needs longer-term.

In June 2019, Adobe launched an ABM Essentials software for Marketo Engage and in September it added the ability for marketers to synch that platform with LinkedIn. In April, 6sense secured $27 million in further funding specifically for ABM orchestration. One month later Demandbase announced a widespread partnership agreement which allows its ABM platform to link with with CRM, marketing automation and other parts of the martech stack. And this is just a fraction of the recent activity in this space.

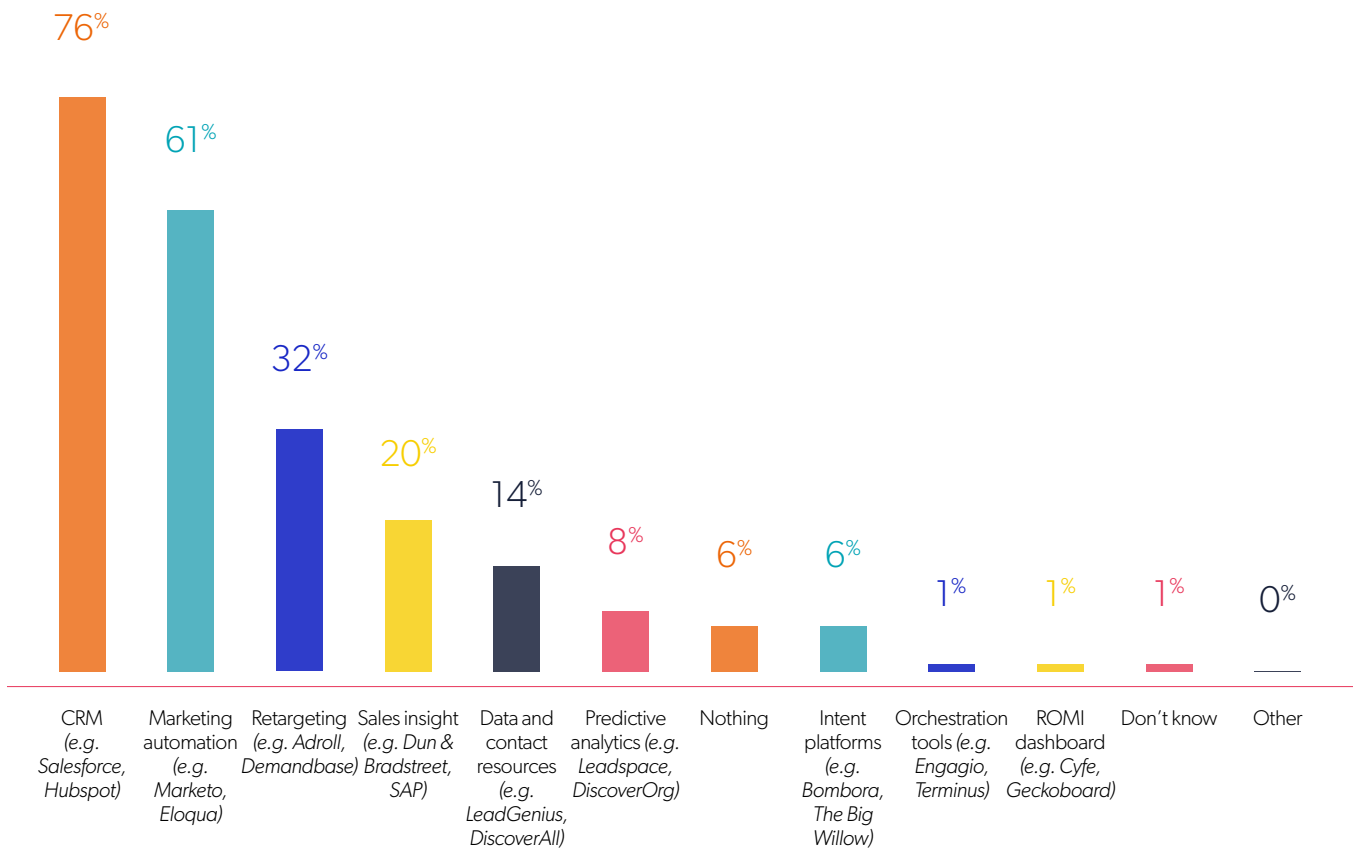
On page 62 you'll find an updated tech stack map for ABM practices, showcasing the most common ABM tech against the five stages of ABM maturity. But before that, let's look a the ABM technology your peers in ABM are using.

Preferred platforms for ABM

The top three tech tools for ABMers are their CRM (76% use this) MA system (61%) and retargeting platforms (32%). Yet beyond that, tech doesn't yet play a focal role in ABM; 20% use sales insight platforms and 14% data and contacts platform, but all other ABM tech has users in the single percentage figures.

As part of our survey, we asked participants which single platform has been the biggest driver in ABM productivity. In particular, Salesforce, Marketo and HubSpot were named as the most useful platforms for ABM (in that order). Other noted top contenders in the CRM space were Oracle and Sugar CRM, for automation Eloqua, Mailchimp and Pardot. Honourable mentions were also given to Demandbase, LinkedIn, ListenLoop (for retargeting) and 6sense (for orchestration).

What tech do you currently use for ABM?



Tech needs across the different ABM methodologies

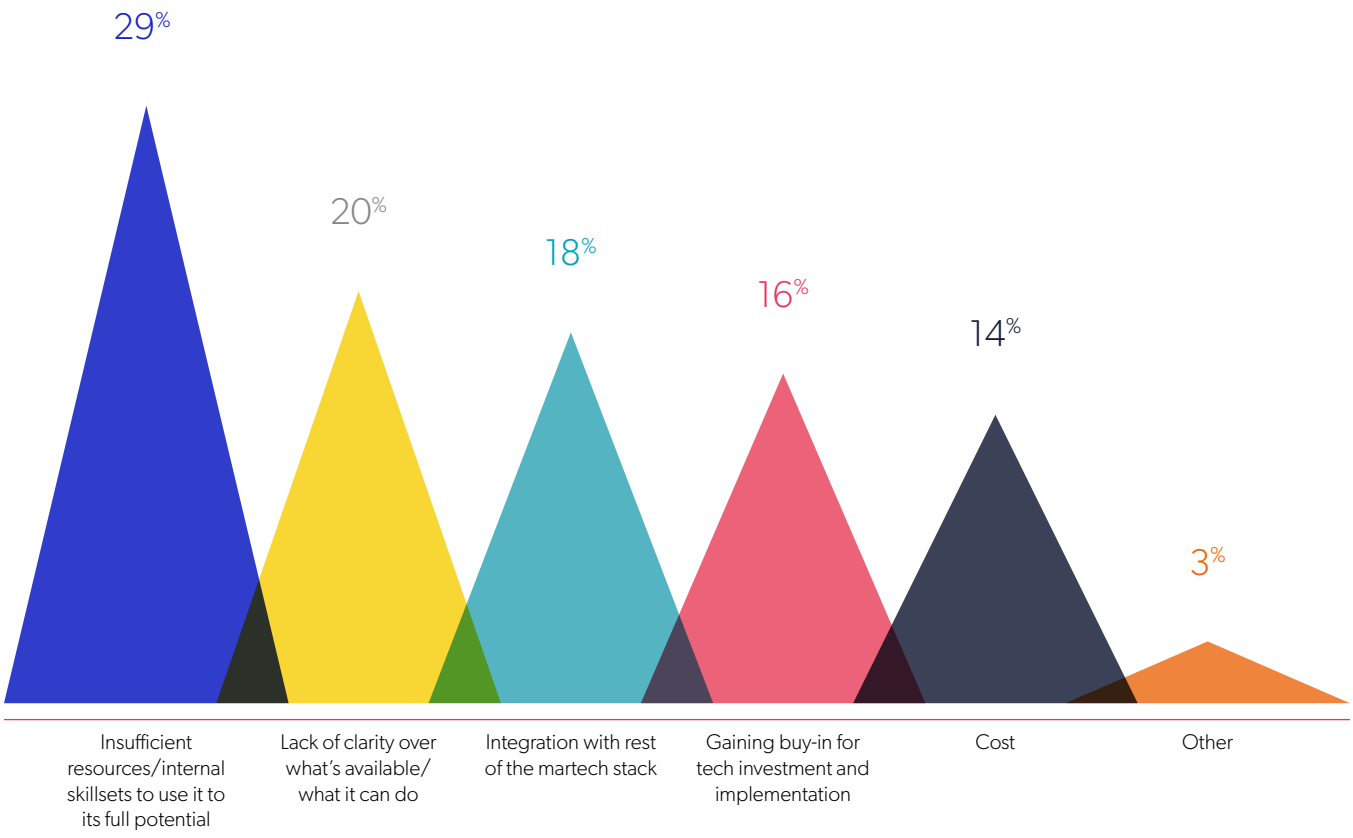
It's important to note that your tech needs – and the point at which that need arises – will differ depending on which method of ABM you have deployed. One-to-one is likely to require much less, and very different, tech versus one-to-many (aka programmatic). Those needs are also likely to come later, after a successful pilot has demonstrated the value of tech investment. Of course, when it comes to one-to-many, where you are aiming to reach a large number of accounts but with a personalised touch, the need for technology is much greater.

Whatever your needs and timeframes, make sure all of your IT stakeholders – including finance, IT and sales – understand ABM, why it requires technology and what that tech requires from its users in order to succeed.

The challenges with deployment

The top challenge for those seeking to deploy ABM technologies is a lack of sufficient internal resource and skills to get the most from it (28%). This is followed by a lack of clarity over what's available (21%). To help with this on page 62 you will find a tech landscape map of those vendors serving the ABM space, segmented by platform type and the stages at which you are most likely to deploy them. That said it is important to caveat that heavy investment in technology is not advisable until you have tested ABM with a pilot and secured enough budget and resource to properly utilise it.

Which is the top challenge you face in relation to technology and ABM?



When it's right (and wrong) to buy ABM tech

"The key mistake we've seen at Demandbase is organisations trying to buy their way into an ABM programme," says Tenessa Lochner, senior ABM education and training manager at Demandbase. "Without a clear use case, objective or ROI your ABM programme is not likely to succeed. You need these fundamental pieces in place first."

"While tech plays an important role in scaling ABM, you don't need a huge investment to get started. Instead, start with a solid strategy and then identify key gaps in which technology can help fill.

Perhaps you've seen great results from a one-to-one approach or a small pilot and are looking to expand and optimise your strategy. That's when you know it's time to introduce technology to your ABM programme. You'll start with modifying your existing technology to make sure your core technologies can support an ABM strategy. It's important to make sure your current technology can easily report, track and take action on accounts (versus contacts/leads)."

Tenessa's advice on finding budget for ABM tech (when you're ready):

- Release budget from non-target accounts: When you focus on your target accounts, you'll find that you start to free up budget.
- Run an experiment : most companies have budget for experimental marketing. Take that budget and use it on ABM initiatives or technology.
- Roll it up: roll ABM technology into already existing categories. For example, if your team is working on a website relaunch, it might be a good time to talk about adding in a personalisation solution to the site.
- Split costs with sales: sales and marketing alignment is key for the success of ABM. Technology investments should help that relationship be more efficient and beneficial.

Advice before you buy

It's not news that the bottom of the ABM pyramid has seen an explosion in technology solutions, all helping marketers address the challenge of reaching large volumes of accounts with relevant tactical content, says Clive Armitage, CEO at Agent3. Here he reflects on the best approach to adopting tech.

"I am seeing definite signs of buyer fatigue at the one-to-many ABM level where marketers have invested in the latest 'shiny new toy' from a technology perspective but then are left floundering to demonstrate ROI. Many of the people I speak to are therefore trying technologies for defined periods of time and then not renewing after the initial period," says Clive.

If you are going to invest in technology, make sure you have a very good answer to how you are going to exploit it.

1. You have a team that 'gets' the tech and can extract value for you.
2. Your preferred technology vendor has a services arm that will work with you to extract value (make sure you get a service level agreement for this too).
3. You have an agency partner that knows how to use the technology you're buying and you can outsource management of it to ensure you get the value you want."

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The B2B Marketing ABM Technology Maturity Map 2019

In this infographic, we've pulled together the vendors and/or solutions that we've listed in the sections above, and mapped them to show where they fit in the different stages of ABM maturity.

Stage 1: Understanding

CRM solutions

act!, Akkroo, copper, dubsado, Highrise, HubSpot CRM, Infusionsoft, InsideView, insightly, MAXIMIZER CRM, Microsoft Dynamics, omeda, ORACLE CRM ON DEMAND, pipedrive, Really Simple Systems, RollWorks, Sage CRM, salesforce, SUGARCRM, zendesk, ZOHO CRM

Marketing automation

ActiveCampaign, act-on, adestra, eloqua, HubSpot, InsideView, mailchimp, Marketo An Adobe Company, MAROPOST, omeda, RollWorks, salesforce marketing cloud, salesforce pardot, salesfusion, SAP, zapier, ZOHO, Zymplify

Stage 2: Preparing

Data and contact resources

ABERDEEN GROUP, ALC, B2BSignals, blue group, salesforce data.com, DiscoverOrg, headreach, infer, InsideView, LeadGenius, leadiro, LEADSCALE, leadspace, MADISON LOGIC, MARTECH, mrp, NETPROSPEX, Oceanos, REACHFORCE, SALESBOXAI, Triblio, SOCIAL123, SYNTHIO, zapier, zoominfo

Sales insights

agent, cb, Crystal, ORACLE DataFox, DiscoverOrg, dun & bradstreet, enlyft, experian, FullContact, InsideView, LeadsBridge, LEADGNOME, LinkedIn, mattermark, momentumabm, mrp, node, NOVA, Owler, RollWorks, SALESBOXAI, SAP, TalentIQ, Triblio, trueInfluence, WOOPRA, xiQ

Stage 3: Delivery

Content tools

Acquia THINK AHEAD, Adobe, Contently, JABMO, LinkedIn, mapp, mrp, PathFactory, passle, SALESBOXAI, SnapApp, sprinklr, Storify, Turtl, Uberflip, zapier

Personalisation tools

AKKROO, BrightInfo., captora, DEMANDBASE, evergage, HubSpot, JABMO, Marketo An Adobe Company, mrp, Optimizely, SALESBOXAI, salesforce pardot, Triblio

Event management

BIZZABO, Certain, cvent, aventri, hubb, Eventbrite, splash, Symphony

Stage 4: Upscaling

Predictive analytics

6sense, bombora, brighttarget, clari, cyance, Data Fuel, infer, Lattice, looker, MINTIGO, mrp, RADIUS, Triblio

ROMI dashboards

Cyfe, GECKOBOARD, Klipfolio, LEFTRONIC, Triblio

Retargetting

AdRoll, DEMANDBASE, JABMO, Kwanzoo, mrp, ListenLoop, SALESBOXAI

Intent platforms

bombora, built With, Datanyze, GHOSTERY, HG DATA, InsideView, JABMO, KickFire, mrp, NetLine, SALESBOXAI, siftery, TechTarget, Triblio, THE BIG WILLOW, Zymplify

Stage 5: Perfecting

Orchestration tools

6sense, Engagio, InsideView, mrp, terminus, Triblio, SALESBOXAI, ZENIQ

Advanced measurement and attribution

bizible, brightfunnel, DOMO, Full Circle INSIGHTS, JABMO, Usan Data, mrp, OMNITURE, SALESBOXAI

Artificial intelligence

Adobe, Albert, fractal, IBM Watson, mrp, SALESBOXAI, SIDETRADE

7.5 Programme and content execution

Rushing into programme and content delivery before you've properly selected and analysed your accounts is money down the drain, because of course, you need to understand your audience in detail in order to create personalised outputs for them. Yet that doesn't mean you have to wait for months of analysis before you take action. In this section we will examine some of the options available to you and advise on processes that can speed up your activity.

Where are my peers in account definition?

Stage 1: Understanding

Our survey shows that ABM practitioners are at stage one of their programme and content delivery. That means while marketing output may be in sympathy with ABM, it's not in adherence with ABM's defined processes.

> *"Clients today expect you to understand everything about their organisation; they expect you to come enabled with a properly structured discussion based around their issues. It's purely driven by the customer. If you're not delivering that, the client switches off and actually you're no longer portraying your company in the right light. In fact, if somebody calls you with something that's not relevant you get annoyed and never want to deal with that organisation again."*
>
> **David Cotterill, marketing director, Europe, Conduent**

The 5 stages of programme and content execution in ABM

Stage 1 (Understanding):
Marketing is not in adherence with ABM

Stage 2 (Preparing):
Content is audited and mapped against customers

Stage 3 (Delivering):
Content serves bespoke propositions

Stage 4 (Upscaling):
Targeted content/ campaigns are delivered

Stage 5 (Perfecting):
Sales are leveraging content

Make things easier with ready-to-go and customisable content

Ready-to-go content

You should be able to send your targets ready-to-go content, and while it won't be bespoke to them, it certainly should be targeted to their needs and interests. Start by auditing the content you have, matching it to your individual accounts and clusters. Then assess which customer needs and challenges must still be addressed and clean up your content that way. Create segmented content packs for each of your account segments, which sales can select different assets from according to their needs.

Customisable content

Simple tricks like repackaging existing content and adding the brand and details suited to your account can make old content work for you all over again. This works especially well for clusters of similar accounts, but just remember there are limitations – the more generic the asset, the less effective it will.

Bespoke output

Truly tailored outputs – whether that's content, events or something more unusual – will take time to produce and can only be created once you've dug into your account's needs and what might make them buy from you. This output is labour intensive but high value, so having off-the-shelf and customisable assets mentioned above will buy you the time you need.

Customisable content templates

Rhiannon Blackwell, ABM lead at Accenture shares insight into her team's content tools and production process.

Accenture's ABM team cut down thinking time for account leads by creating an ABM tool kit, which recommends tactics and channels based on the challenges the account is facing.

The team has also made off-the-shelf content that's quick and easy to tailor, which also grants the team some quick wins. "When we have the first conversation [with the account lead] we have five options of things we can start the next week, meanwhile we delve into understanding the outcomes the client wants to drive and the outcomes we want," says Rhiannon Blackwell, ABM lead at Accenture.

A great example of the power of repurposing is Accenture's annual Technology Vision report, which lists the five tech trends the business believes will shape companies. "We knew it was a great piece of content but we needed to hand pick the pieces that were relevant to our clients," says Rhiannon.

"We worked with technology experts on each of our teams to select trends and write about why they were relevant and what they mean for each of our clients. We had amazing results, our open rate was about 55%."

For case studies of successful ABM campaigns, turn to pages 17, 38 and 66

4 things to remember about your programme and content execution

1. Assess which content types and channels your targets will respond best to

What do we mean by programme and content execution? In essence, it's the delivery of your targeted ABM marketing – whether that's through digital content, direct mail, events or social targeting. The method you select should of course match your audience and desired outcomes. What format do you targets already engage most with? Which channels of delivery do they prefer? Are they short of time and want quick, easy access to messaging or do they need detailed support, training and thought leadership? Do they want simple solutions or to be wowed by something they've not seen before? While you'll want to look at historic engagement and consumption data don't rule out methods you haven't used for a while. Direct mail is a good example here as often the unexpected delivers more delight.

"Our ABM programmes will be multi-touch from channel agnostic to digital media and paid social media. It will typically have one or two touches by direct mail and may include an event. They're more intrinsic programmes than a one-off initiative."

Mike Boogaard, CEO, Alias Partners

2. The value of your content isn't based on production cost but personalisation

It's easy to think that the swankier your event, the higher the production costs or the more technologically advanced your campaign, the more heads it'll turn. But it just isn't so. ABM isn't about flashiness it's about personalisation, and often the most simplistic techniques are the ones that build a sense of trust. That doesn't mean slipping into tired old tricks, but nor does it mean ABM outputs will cost you a fortune.

"Delivery doesn't have to be expensive. During the exploration phase of our programme, we tested a number of tactics to improve client relationships. The one we were most excited about – a quite expensive event – turned out to be less effective than anticipated. The reason? Our sales department hadn't yet bought in 100%. A much more personal booklet, on the other hand, struck the right chord with the client and gave our company a face."

David De Smedt, European marketing and communications manager, DS Smith

3. Forget the sales pitch and focus on the customers' needs

It's an obvious one but it's so intrinsic to ABM that it bears saying again. Your business might be used to telling the world how great it is, what it does, what it has to offer and why it's different. But no one cares as much as you and your colleagues. No one is really listening. Your customers want to know how to fix their own problems and improve their outcomes. All of your messaging must be geared around that. You need to demonstrate that you understand them and their issues – and that you've got just the thing to help them out.

"Instead of leading with 'We're Wood Mac and this is our product', we now open with 'we know your pain-points, we have the solution, and this is why you should read on to see how we can support your business needs'."

Laura McFadyen, ABM manager, Wood Mackenzie (now senior marketing manager, Core HR)

4. Measure and learn from your results

Unfortunately there's no guarantee that your attention and dedication to an account will win them over, some accounts will respond to you and others won't. The best thing you can do is to select the right accounts at the beginning and measure and respond to your results as they come in. What's working and why? What can be replicated and how? This extends to the output you create, the channel you push it through and the account you choose going forward.

"Sometimes you get two companies that look exactly the same, they're the same profile, and you'd expect the same results. But when it comes down to it, one is really engaged with a specific tactic and the other is completely unengaged. Analysing the results is imperative, it allows me to understand what tactics and content resonate best in each account and I can ramp up on what's working."

Laura McFadyen, ABM manager at Wood Mackenzie

Case study

Breaking down silos. Building scale: MomentumABM for SAP

Siloed and in need of scale, SAP's business challenge required a creative response. The ABM Asset Delivery Platform was born – a self-service digital repository with a high-end customer experience. Accessible 24/7 with price points and customisation options to meet all needs it has already resulted in 24 C-level engagements and $14.9m of revenue with a projected pipe of more than $500m. Moreover, it helped close the second biggest deal in SAP's half-century history.

About SAP

Two challenges stood in its way. First, internal sales and marketing teams are vast and can work in silos, making it difficult to take a synergistic and united approach to customer needs. A series of acquisitions complicated internal relationships further. Second, existing approaches to enterprise sales and marketing lacked scale. While the adoption of account-based marketing had proved hugely successful, it applied only to a top tier of elite accounts. SAP wanted an effective and efficient way of bringing ABM to as many accounts and prospects as possible.

Objectives

- Align siloed functions within SAP
- Enable SAP to deliver ABM at scale
- Bring greater consistency and quality to the assets available to sales and marketing teams
- Reach more prospects by provoking relevant conversations and demonstrating value
- Assert SAP's voice around the digital transformation agenda.

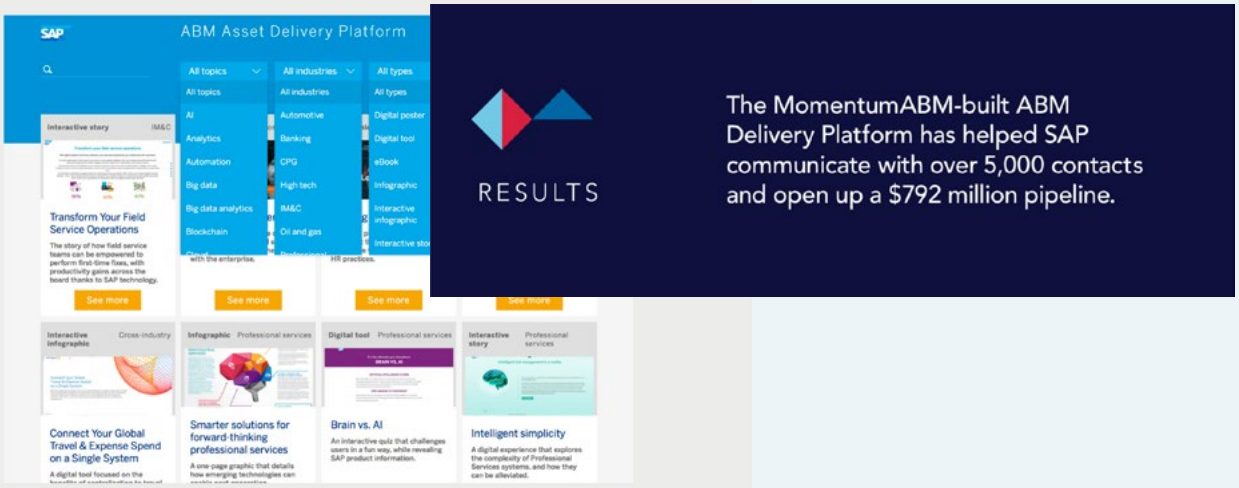
> *"Outstanding. This is huge. Truly incredible work!"*
>
> SAP senior sales executive

Media, channels and techniques used

SAP started with upfront prioritisation and clustered accounts across regions and industries. It then undertook a series of deep-dive discovery sessions with account sales teams to gather insights on sector trends, account audiences, barriers, and opportunities while undertaking external research on the same topics.

In efforts to break down internal silos it brought sales and marketing teams together for a series of kick-off sessions. The insights gathered informed an overall strategy and helped SAP articulate a series of value propositions and recommended engagement tactics for groups of accounts in industry verticals.

As a result of this collective work, SAP built a self-service account-based marketing platform. Launched on 1 October 2018, the ABM Asset Delivery Platform provides a central hub to store, index and track account- specific content and interactions. A range of account-specific tools – from infographics, thought leadership, stakeholder mapping, interactive stories, digital posters, insight profiles, and more – can be used off-the-shelf or revised as required. It also maps the type of deals SAP is involved in and the scenarios in creating and securing those deals. Global teams can select the materials they need and decide on levels of customisation.



A self-serve platform that allows sales and marketing to create hyper-targeted creative assets to propel client conversations along the buying cycle.

The platform is underpinned by a standard set of prices, processes, and service levels. The teams at MomentumABM respond to requests and manage fulfillment based on a visual bill of materials. The result is 'straight-through' creation from request to completion. This templated approach – featuring impactful, customer-ready content – allows SAP to achieve the benefits of scale without losing the essence of ABM.

Timescales

- **March – May 2018:** Planning phase
- **April – May 2018:** Insights phase
- **May – October 2018:** Phase 1 rollout
- **November 2018:** March 2019: Phase 2 rollout

Budget:

$500,000 (USD)

Results

- Helped SAP secure the second biggest deal in its half-century history
- Drove $14.9m of revenue with $500m in pipeline
- Instigated over 24 C-level engagements
- Impacted over 250 accounts
- Provided insights across 30 strategic topics
- Delivered upwards of 150 engagement tactics to support accounts
- Supported nearly 100 sales and marketing colleagues.

The programme helped build the SAP brand and accelerate growth by:

1. **Driving pipeline:** The programme influenced or accelerated $14.9m of revenue with a projected value of over $500m. Recently, a series of carefully crafted tools – accessed from the Platform – were used in the sales cycle including executive meetings. The results were astonishing. It helped close the second largest deal in the company's history.

2. **Growing customer relationships:** Its initiative has instigated over 24 C-level engagements. One major automotive account was so impressed it asked to meet the ABM team.

3. **Deepening customer insights:** To date it has touched 250 strategic accounts and uncovered insights across 30 strategic topics.

Section 8

Key takeaways



Section 7

Key takeaways

Alignment

Internal alignment starts with key stakeholder buy-in from your marketing team, sales, executives and the board. Once you have secured this (and that is no easy feat in itself), the majority of your efforts will be to maintain your understanding and alliance with sales. Friction between you will have an effect on your performance.

Alignment with sales isn't just about being friendly, quite the contrary – it needs to be underpinned with formal agreements and processes. The most important of these are a key account programme, aligned targets and incentives and a service level agreement (SLA) – the latter of which only 21% have.

You can also use psychological profiling to better understand and connect with your stakeholders – both personality profiles such as Myers Briggs and bespoke persona building can help you.

Account definition

Most ABM practitioners are delivering small-scale ABM having selected a number of choice accounts. This year, there is a slight preference for the larger pool of accounts that one-to-few (versus one-to-one) offers. That's because more accounts (although more work) increases the chance of securing deals.

But of course, the best chance you've got of winning those deals is not really down to the number of accounts but the quality of them. As we discussed in last year's ABM report, where most programmes fail is during the account selection processes. At best, a lack of account due diligence will slow down your delivery. At worst, it'll mean no results, friction between stakeholders and a loss of belief in ABM.

Even those who are delivering programmes on their selected accounts should regularly assess those choices through a rigorous process.

Data and insight

Both this year and last, data has been ABM practitioners' biggest challenge. But let's be honest, the problem exists independent of ABM. For many years we have invited data into our organisations at a quicker rate than we could process or properly analyse. This means the information we have is messy, in duplicate, incomplete and so vast, it feels an overwhelmingly large task to fix it all.

It is a tall order, but it's also a huge positive that ABM is now a catalyst to improve all of this. What's surprising is how few pitch this task within the context of the business' long-term and wider needs. Ask yourself who and what else this data cleanse would benefit? Are there other projects or supporters you can bring in as allies? Could you secure more funding or resource if you pitched the wider business case?

Technology

There's certainly a buzz in the ABM tech sphere – not yet from customers but from vendors gearing up to support their needs longer-term. Although at the early stages ABM can be carried out almost entirely independent of tech, it's prudent to scope

out the opportunities tech vendors provide and how others are deploying them.

The top three tech tools for ABMers are their CRM (76% use this) MA system (61%) and retargeting platforms (32%). Yet beyond that, tech doesn't yet play a focal role in ABM; 20% use sales insight platforms and 14% data and contacts platform.

If you are thinking of investing ensure your team – including any agency partners – know how to use this tech, speak to people who've already bought and used it and think hard about whether it's worth early investment.

Programme and content execution

Rushing into programme and content delivery before you've properly selected and analysed your accounts is money down the drain, because of course, you need to understand your audience in detail in order to create personalised outputs for them. Yet, that doesn't mean you have to wait for months of analysis before you take action.

Truly tailored outputs – whether that's content, events or something more unusual – will take time to produce and can only be created once you've dug into your account's needs and what might make them buy from you. This output is labour intensive but high value, so having off-the-shelf and customisable assets will buy you time and give sales assets to select from according to their needs.

About

B2B Marketing

With hundreds of thousands of users across the globe, we are the leading trusted voice at the centre of the B2B marketing community.

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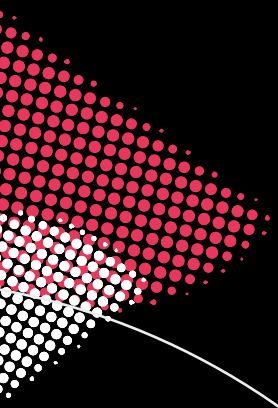
How to get started

- Go to b2bmarketing.net/join to set up your Premium membership.
- Check out Events, Training and Enterprise Solutions on our website.
- Call us on +44 (0)207 014 4920 if you'd like to discuss your specific business needs.

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